

OLD SLEUTH'S OWN.

No. 145.

10 CENTS.

A LEAGUE OF THREE;

OR,

A Boy's Detective Stratagems.

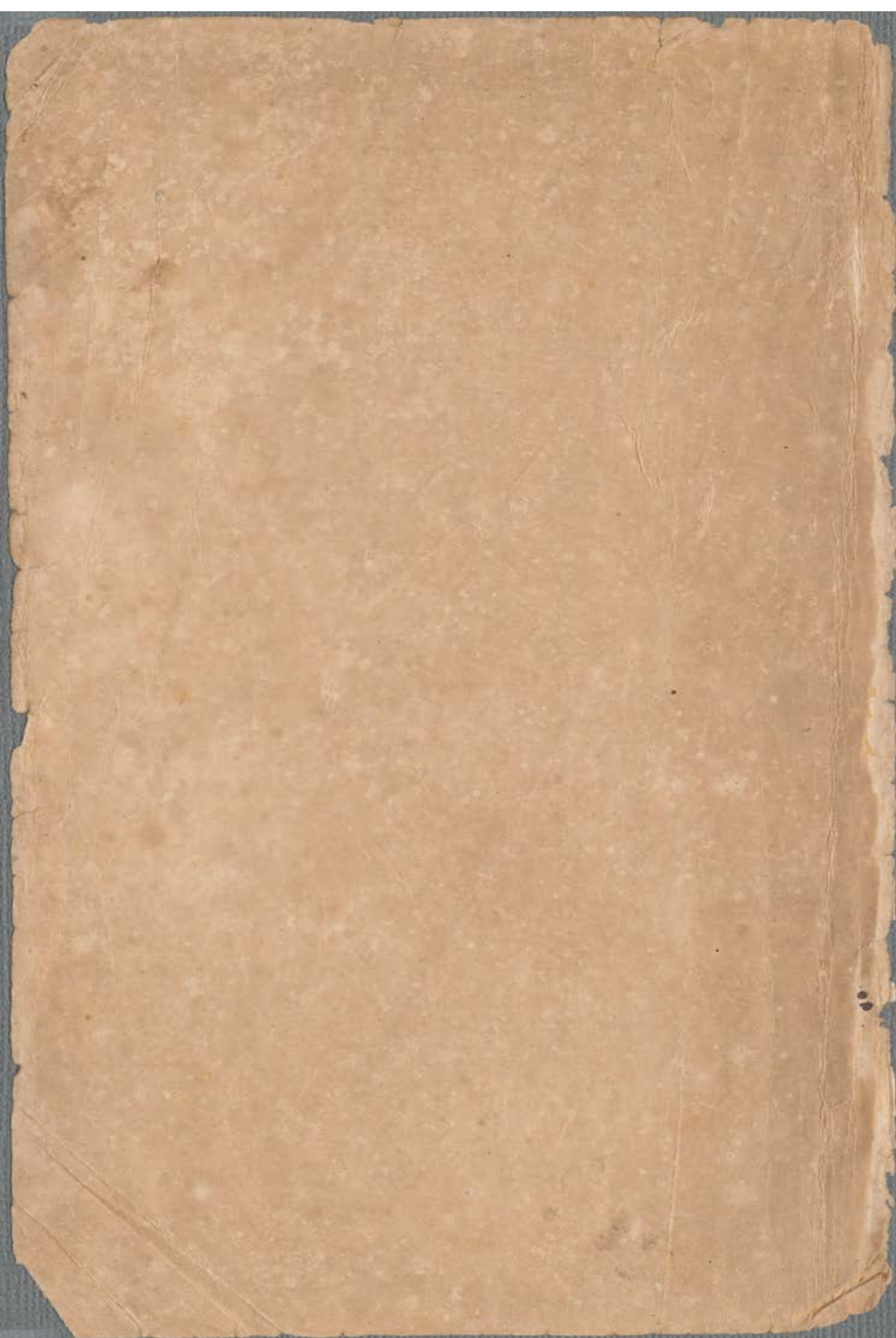
A Tale of Disguises and Surprises.

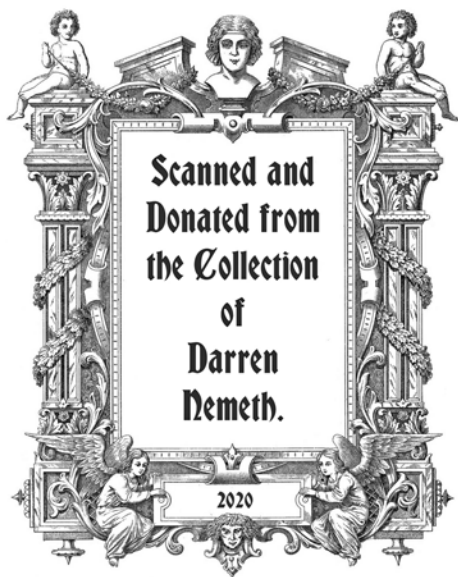
By OLD SLEUTH.



"WE SWEAR!"

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By OLD SLEUTH.

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A LEAGUE OF THREE.

CHAPTER I.

THE OATH.

"We swear."

The circumstances under which the words were spoken with which we begin our narrative were strange and peculiar, and in order that our readers may understand their full significance we will relate that in a mountain town up in the State of New York one severe winter there followed a series of very sad incidents. Two years previous to the opening of our narrative a young gentleman had come to the town as a teacher. He was accompanied by his wife, a delicate but exceedingly pretty woman, and a lovely daughter of thirteen summers. The whole family at once became very popular with the kind-hearted mountaineers. Addie, the daughter, was beloved by every one in the county for miles around. Within three months after the arrival of the teacher his pretty wife died, and in less than two years Mr. Robert Velkanau became the victim of pneumonia and was carried to his grave, and out of the family of three only Addie remained—a beautiful but penniless orphan. Among the lads living in the mountains was Madie Heath, also an orphan. He was a remarkable lad, and in this, the nineteenth century, there

are to-day many very remarkable boys living in our great cities and also in the rural districts.

Madison Heath was a robust lad of seventeen, an expert shot with the rifle, a splendid fisherman and swimmer, and indeed he excelled in all athletic exercises. His parents had left a small sum of money for his education, and he had spent four years at a seminary in Massachusetts, and when his term at school was completed he was prepared to enter college; but his guardian, a lawyer, advised him otherwise and he accepted the advice and determined to study law without wasting four years in college.

At the seminary Madie had excelled in every game. He was the mainstay in the football team and the great pitcher in the ball team, and many inducements were held out to him to enter college and become a member of the various college teams; but, as intimated, his means did not permit the waste of time and he returned to his native village.

Addie, the schoolteacher's daughter, was fourteen and Madie sixteen when he returned from the seminary, and the two from the start became fast friends. The lad taught her to swim, fish and shoot. Under her father they studied German and French together, for Addie's father was supposed to be of French birth, although he had never so declared. There had grown up a great attachment between the boy and girl, and in her hour of sorrow no one was more sympathizing or said kinder words than Madie.

After the death of both parents it was learned that the orphan was absolutely penniless, as intimated, and many plans were suggested for her. It was admitted on all sides that she was fitted for something better than a mere farm girl, and there was no one in the village rich enough to maintain her in idleness, and when a letter came from a former friend of her mother offering to take her and have

her educated as a musician or dressmaker a purse was raised to send her to New York. It was a sad day when she bade the good people adieu from the seat of the farm wagon in which she was to be driven down the mountain and across the country to the railway station.

The night before her departure, Madie had held a long talk with Addie, and the girl had agreed to write to our hero at least once a month, and she did write twice and then her letters ceased.

Madie had two friends: one of them, it was reported, was of Indian descent—his name was Peter Ogallah. His other friend was the son of the lawyer who was Madie's guardian. These boys were constant companions and they had spent weeks together in the wilderness, deer and bear hunting. All three were brave, athletic fellows, and as honest and loyal as any three boys that ever rode, swam or hunted together.

Madie was compelled to ride two miles to the post office and he had made the trip daily for a whole month succeeding the date when he had a right to expect a letter from Addie, and as the letter did not come he became very moody and restless, and one day when he and his two friends were standing on the shore of a mountain lake he said:

"Boys, something has happened to Addie; I believe she is dead."

Madie's two companions were well aware of his fondness for Addie and they were in full sympathy with him.

"Oh, I reckon nothing has happened, Madie. She is possibly very busy and has not had time to write to you."

"Addie would always find time to write to me. No; she is dead or something else has happened to her, and if I do not hear from her in a few days I am going to the city to learn what has become of her."

"Why don't you write to the lady with whom Addie was to stay?"

"I have written. I wrote two weeks ago and have received no answer, and that is the reason I feel assured that something has happened to her."

"You will hear in a few days and learn that everything is all right."

"There is one thing, boys; if I go away it will break up our league."

"No, it will not; that league between us stands forever," said Peter Ogallah.

"That's what I say," chimed in Ludlow Woods.

That evening Madie drove over to the post office and he received a letter. He opened it with fear and trembling, for the direction was in a strange hand. The letter ran as follows:

"MR. MADISON HEATH: I received your letter but did not answer it immediately, as I was awaiting developments. Addie is lost to us; three weeks ago she started for the office where she was temporarily engaged as a copyist. We have not seen or heard from her since and we fear the worst. She may be dead or may have been abducted; it is the latter fate we fear has overtaken her. She is a very pretty girl and there is always great danger for a poor and pretty girl seeking to earn her living in a great city. We have used every means to solve the mystery: we have advertised and also placed the matter in the hands of the police. Her employer is a reputable man; he declares she did not appear at the office the morning of her disappearance. The police believe his statement; we have no reason to doubt. Poor child, it is to be hoped that she is dead rather than that a worse fate has overtaken her. I delayed writing, as I said, in hopes I might know something definite, and if any news of her is ever obtained I will write to you, as I know you were her dearest friend; indeed she constantly spoke of you to me. I am heart-broken and have done all that I can, and shall still strive to solve the mystery, and until we know further believe me your friend and well-wisher,

"MRS. JAMES METCALF."

Madie read and reread the note, and his blood ran cold. He became, as it were, blind with emotion, and on his road back to the village he fairly raved in his wild threatnings of revenge upon any one who had worked any wrong to Addie, the one being on earth whom he idolized.

That night Madie notified his two friends to meet him beside the mountain lake upon the following morning, and at the time appointed the five friends were all present. When we speak of five friends we include Carlo, Ogallah's dog, and Bertie, Ludlow Woods' colt. It was in the early morning when the three lads met, and Madie read the letter he had received, and when the reading was concluded a few moments of ominous silence followed, broken at length by our hero, who said:

"Boys, I am going to New York to find Addie or die in the attempt. If I do not find her I will find who wronged her and I will make him pay the penalty. We are sworn friends and I wish to ask one favor: if you do not hear from me in three months one of you must come to New York and take up the work where I leave it. If I leave off it will be because I am dead, and if the one who follows me dies also I want the last one to come and carry on the work."

"I will go next," said Ogallah.

"No, I will go," said Ludlow Woods.

"Draw lots. I will write every three months, and remember, if at the end of three months during the coming year you do not hear from me you will know I am dead."

"And I will go and avenge you," said Ogallah.

"No, I will go," cried Ludlow.

"Boys, you must draw lots to decide."

"All right; we will do so now in your presence."

"No, no; wait until the time comes for one or the other of you to go. In the meantime we will renew our oath to stand by each other until death."

The three lads clasped hands over a gun. Carlo, the dog, appeared to be impressed by the scene, and elevated his nose in the air as though joining in the oath and fully appreciating the solemnity of the scene, and Ludlow's colt also appeared to realize that something that concerned him was going on, and he watched the scene with lifted ears, and it was then after Madie had repeated the terms of the oath that the lads in concert asserted:

"We swear."

Madie had told his guardian of his determination and there were reasons why Mr. Woods did not offer any opposition. He gave Madie a hundred dollars and bade him write for a few dollars more at the end of six months if he needed it. Our hero had made all his preparations for his departure; he had his clothes slung on his shoulder at the time of taking the oath. He had determined to walk part of the way to the city to save expenses; for, as he said to his comrades, "I may need every dollar before I run down the villain who killed Addie."

After the taking of the oath Ludlow Woods said:

"Madie, I wish I were going with you;" and Pete Ogallah said:

"Don't wait to be killed; if you need help send for me and I will foot it to New York to aid you."

Boys are always very inconsiderate and impetuous; they do not stop to measure consequences, and they often display a persistence and courage where men would quail and give out.

"If I need you, Pete, I'll let you know."

"Don't fail; don't fail. I've got Indian blood in my veins, you know, and I am like a hound on a hunt."

"Yes, Pete, you may be of service to me, and if I find I need you I will send for you."

Madie walked over and caressed the colt and lovingly bade the good little galloper good-by. He also embraced

Carlo, the dog, who had accompanied the boys so often over brake and lake for days and days successively. He then embraced his two companions, and then with tears in his eyes said:

"Pete and Lud, my friends, good-by. We'll meet again, hope, and if we do the fate of Addie will be known. If I fail I die; if I win woe to any one who has done her harm;" and his two friends of the league repeated:

"Yes, woe to any one who has done her wrong."

The boys indulged in a final hand-shake and Madie started off through the woods, refusing to let his companions accompany him on the way, and as he disappeared he heard ringing in his ears the refrain:

"We will be true to each other until death. We swear, we swear."

CHAPTER II.

MADIE'S ADVENTURE WITH TWO TRAMPS.

A MORE resolute lad than Madie Heath never started for a tramp to New York, nor did there ever live a lad of more dogged courage and coolness in trying moments. We will not say there are not lads just as brave and cool as he; what we do say is that there never lived a lad with greater courage and persistence. Madie loved Addie and yet he had never spoken one word of love to her; he had never hinted more than friendship. She was but a child, as it were, and he was a mere youth. No doubt he had all along indulged a hope that some day, when he had made a success, that he might talk love to her, but even at the time when she departed for New York and they had made

the agreement of mutual correspondence it was only as friends they had spoken and parted.

We have seen boys who are natural giants in physical strength, and Madie was one of these physical wonders. Few men, strong men, would have been a match for him in a regular rough and tumble scrimmage, and with all he was a marvel of agility. He had grown up a strong lad and his life methods and surroundings had tended to develop his muscles into a consistence like a whip cord. He was also a very shrewd lad, and, we may say, in his keenness and aptitude in comparing causes and effects he was a born detective. In fact he possessed all the qualities of an old-timer tracking bears and deer and studying the habits of fish, and indeed his whole experience in the woods had tended to educate all the powers needed in the quest he had undertaken.

Madie was well acquainted with the city of Boston, and consequently pretty well up in city ways, for any one who does not know that Boston is a lively town does not know the place, that's all; but our hero had never been in New York. He had read about New York, and had read about all the dangers that beset the path of a stranger in New York, as indeed they do in any great city. Sharps are always on the lookout for countrymen, and though they climb up the wrong tree, strike a big snake where they are looking for caterpillars, they still lay around to take chances.

As stated, Madie had read all about New York, and probably knew more of its ways than many a lad born in the city, and perhaps he was posted as concerned every possible trick that might be attempted. There is no reason why every country lad who reads should not be equally well posted as concerns the various tricks and devices of the criminal classes. Madie, as stated, was well posted, and consequently well prepared to take care of himself while still a stranger in a strange city.

Madie traveled until night and then found a cave by going off from his path. It was a wild, romantic place where he decided to camp for the night, beside a river which rushed with a continuous roar over its shallow bed.

The lad built a fire and cooked a trout which he had captured late in the afternoon. He also had a little meat and bread which he had brought with him, and in good time, without one tremor of fear, he lay down to sleep.

Like a bird Madie was up and around before the sun showed above the horizon, and after a quick meal he started on his way, and ere nightfall reached the valley country, where every few miles he struck a farmhouse. He had trudged a great number of miles, and as twilight settled over the country he looked around for a nice place to sleep for the night. He did not seek to gain an entrance into any of the farmhouses. The numberless tramps that traverse the country have destroyed all the old-time hospitality which formerly distinguished farmers; they are afraid of strangers now, and one must be known in most instances in order to gain a night's lodging. Our hero passed several taverns, but he was husbanding his money, and as long as the weather was clear he did not mean to expend any money for bed or board. He felt he might need every dollar of his little sum of cash before he got through the quest that had led him to tramp to the city of New York.

At length darkness settled around him and he determined to go off into the woods and camp under the trees, and he passed along a path through the forests, when he came to an old cabin. He lit the lantern he carried with him and glanced around. All appeared fairly clean, and making a broom of twigs he brushed up, and taking his pack for a pillow, settled down for the night, and soon fell asleep. He had been asleep possibly a couple of hours when he was suddenly awakened by hearing voices. He

started to a sitting position and listened, and he overheard a conversation that would have made an ordinary lad tremble with terror. Madie, on the contrary, felt a thrill of indignation.

Two men were outside the cabin. They were standing close to the doorway, and their words could be distinctly heard.

"Say Chummie, if there ain't a lad asleep in our 'bunker' you can shoot me."

"Eh? some one in our house?"

"Yes."

"What sort of clothes does he wear?"

"I've seen better, and I've seen worse. He has a pack though, and I reckon he has a little cash. He's a traveler, he is."

"Has he got a bottle?"

"Didn't see a bottle; but he's got the price of a bottle, you bet."

"Good enough; he's our mutton."

"Don't let's rob."

"Oh, no; we won't rob him, no, no."

"We'll scare him. See?"

"Yes, we'll scare him."

"Then he'll make us a present. See?"

"Sure, he'll make us a present."

"Poor boy; eh, won't he scare when he sees us two covies?"

"He will."

"But see here, pard, a boy don't need what he's got."

"No, no."

"We'll divide with him, eh? We won't rob him; we'll only make an exchange."

"That's it."

"And if he's got any money he will pay us the difference on the trade. See?"

"That's it; yes, he'll pay us the difference."

"He might get robbed, see; but no one would steal our clothes from him after he buys. They're charmed, see? yes, they're charmed. Ours are magic suits, eh?"

"Yes, ours are magic suits."

"Observation suits."

"Yes."

"Do you catch on?"

"Give it to us."

"There're observation suits because you can see through them, eh?"

The two rascals laughed at their joke.

Madie located the rascals. He appreciated that they were a pair of tramps, and he foresaw that they intended to rob him, and a grim smile overspread his determined face. Madie was a strong, courageous, robust lad, every muscle hardened, while the tramps were two fat, pussy, rum-weakened scoundrels, who had neither strength nor wind.

"Say, pard, this is rich; ain't it?"

"Yes; Providence sent us two worthy Christians right here, eh? I wonder if he's our raven, if he can feed us? I am hungry, I am; see if he has any grub."

"Let's go in and open up the fun."

Madie made up his mind that the fun would be his, not theirs. The lad was a fun lover, and under the circumstances he enjoyed the prospect of the great surprise he had for the two intending robbers.

The two tramps had a lantern, a little dilapidated affair, and they shuffled into the shanty. Madie had fallen back and pretended to be asleep. Chuckling and grinning, the men approached, and one of them suddenly barked like a dog. Madie lay still; the two men looked into each other's faces.

"Eh, pard, what's the matter? Have we struck a stiff?"

Maybe he's starved to death, eh? Then there's no grub."

"And there will be no trade if he's dead; we are his heirs."

Again the two men laughed, and one of them barked again and Madie still lay perfectly quiet.

"Hang it, pard, I believe he is dead."

"Shake him."

"Not me."

"What's the matter?"

"I don't put my hands on the dead."

"Why not?"

"Well, I don't want to be haunted."

"You're a fool."

"Am I?"

"Yes."

"Well, he's there; you feel him. See if he is cold yet."

"No, it's your turn."

"My turn?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Didn't I go through the covie last night? Yes, it's your turn."

"I'll yell."

"All right, yell."

The man uttered a yell almost loud and hideous enough to arouse the dead, and the sleeper did not move.

"Pard, he's dead."

"All right; let's take possession of our inheritance."

"Go ahead."

"No; you go it."

"No, you go."

"What's the matter—are you afraid?"

"Yes, I am afraid. I ain't afraid of no living thing; but, pard, I am a little shaky when it comes to feeling of a 'stiff.'"

"You're no good."

"That's so; you always were braver than me."

"But it's your turn."

"I give you my chance; you test him."

"Holler again."

"No use. Hollerin' ain't going to wake that feller up; he's an eternal sleeper, he is. Any feller who could sleep after the one yell I gave will never be awakened up any more short of the last trump, and I ain't the appointed trumpeter, pard. No, just feel it—will yer?"

"You do it."

"Not this evening; some other evening, pard."

"Let's poke him with a stick."

"That's a good scheme."

"Then we can make sure."

"Yes, we can make sure. You poke him."

One of the men had his walking stick and he stood off and poked Madie. The boy did not move.

"See here, pard, it's no use; that's a 'stiff,' sure."

The man spoke in a subdued and husky voice and Madie, as he lay playing 'possum, thought: "Well, they are having lots of fun, but the fun hasn't commenced yet. I am laying for them."

The lad was indeed "laying for them," lying as still as though he were indeed a corpse.

"What shall we do, pard?"

"Them's a nice pair of boots there."

"Yes, they are; but they won't fit us."

"They are good for a jug of whisky all the same."

"You bet."

"They are a part of our inheritance."

"You bet."

"Take 'em, pard."

"Yes, bime by; not right off."

"Golly, it's queer."

"It is."

"He don't look as though he were dead."

"Maybe he's playing 'possum."

"Eh?"

"Maybe he's playing 'possum."

"Didn't we yell?"

"Yes."

"Didn't we bark?"

"Yes."

"And he wouldn't wake?"

"That's so."

"Didn't we poke him?"

"We did."

"And he wouldn't wake?"

"You're right; but take his boots, that ain't touching the dead."

The man attempted to pull the boots, along with Madie's pack, from under his head, and then the lad sighed.

The two tramps leaped back in alarm; the sigh came unexpectedly, like a cough from a corpse.

"Eh, pard?"

"He's alive."

"You bet."

"He's waking up, he is."

"Let's wake him."

"We will."

"Say, mister!" called one of the men.

Madie rose up to a sitting position and the two tramps fell back, but in a moment recovered their courage and one of them said:

"Good-evening, sonny."

"Good-evening," said Madie.

"You were sound asleep."

"Yes."

"You bet; you were very much asleep, you were."

"Yes, I am a good sleeper."

"You haven't paid your lodging, sonny."

"What's that?"

"You haven't paid your lodging. This 'ere hotel belongs to me and my pard here. We don't let no one sleep here who don't pay their lodging."

"How much do you charge for a night's lodging?"

The two tramps thought the night's lodging "fake" a good one.

"We charge high."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"For lodging in this tumbled-down place?"

"You ain't got no appreciation, sonny."

"I can appreciate this place."

"You can, eh?"

"Yes, I can."

"Then you will pay us two dollars for your lodging."

"Pay you two dollars?"

"That's our charge."

"For a nap in this old place?"

"Yes, sir; you don't appreciate the advantages. Yes, sir; pure air and plenty of it, no shingles over your head here, but the stars—yes, the pure stars—and the deep blue sky, and a little of the moon; yes, plenty of room. It's cheap, it is, for all these advantages; and the quiet—yes, the quiet—that's worth a dollar, anyway."

The two tramps laughed, and their eyes gleamed when Madie said:

"I can't afford to pay a dollar; I've got to save my money. I am going to New York and I have got only ten or fifteen dollars."

Well, there came looks of delight on the faces of the two rascally tramps; ten or fifteen dollars, and they had a boy at midnight all alone in the woods—had him all to themselves!

"That ain't much money; no, sonny, that ain't much money, but we were letting you have your lodging cheap, see! We didn't know you were rich; we charge rich men more. Yes, we charge rich men five dollars a night."

"But I haven't been here all night."

"Never mind; you've mussed the bed all up, so it's just the same."

Both rascals laughed at their conceit and witticisms.

"You should feed a feller at that price."

"Feed you, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, you have got a cheek."

"Do you think I have a cheek?"

"Yes, you've got an iron cheek, you have."

"I think you fellers have a cheek."

"How's that?"

"To charge a man two dollars."

"But see the accommodations; the free, pure air, the free, pure stars and the room. Yes, you've had the house all to yourself."

"And I've had enough of it."

"You have, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, settle."

"Settle for what?"

"Your lodging."

"Oh, go 'long and let me alone. You have carried your joke far enough."

"Hello, pard, he calls it a joke. Did you ever see such cheek?"

"Never."

"No, never."

"Hardly ever."

"Well, hardly ever."

Again the tramps laughed. They thought they had what is called a soft snap, and one of them said:

"When a man don't pay up do you know what we do?"

"No."

"We call him a trespasser."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Well, what then?"

"Do you know what we do with trespassers?"

"No. What do you do with them?"

"We strangle 'em."

The tramp assumed a terrible look and tone as he pronounced the doom of the trespasser.

CHAPTER III.

MADIE HAS SOME FUN—THE TRAMPS DON'T.

OUR hero, upon hearing the terrible threat, pretended to be scared almost to death, and in a frightened tone he said:

"Oh, you are only joking."

"No; we never joke, we don't. We are millionaires, we are, we can't afford to joke; so pay up."

"I can't pay you two dollars."

"You can't, eh?"

"No."

"Then we will have to call you a trespasser."

"I know you are only joking."

"Say, pard," said one of the tramps, "he's too young to strangle."

"Yes, he's too young."

"Let's let him trade it out."

"Yes, trade it out."

"Say, sonny, we'll give you a chance to save your life."

"Thank you."

"We'll let you trade it out. We'll give you a good trade; yes, a bang-up trade."

"I don't want to trade."

"Eh, pard? He don't want to do nothing. Did you ever see such a feller?"

"I've got nothing to trade."

"We're sorry for you, sonny; yes, we're awful sorry for you and we'll treat you nice—yes, real nice. Now, see here; we're millionaires, we are; these clothes cost a big sum of money. They are a little worn—yes, just a little worn—and we'll trade with you. Yes, we'll trade; we'll give you our clothes for yours and fifteen dollars to boot. That's a big bargain for you; yes, a big bargain."

"Your clothes are no good."

"Just hear him, pard. Our clothes are no good!"

"I don't want to trade anyway; your clothes won't fit me."

"You can cut 'em down."

"Mine are too small for you."

"We'll cut 'em up."

Again the two tramps laughed.

"I want to go," said Madie.

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Well, you shall go, sonny; yes, after we have made a trade. Now don't make any trouble; we don't want to strangle you, but, maybe you may compel us to do so, see."

"No, I don't see it."

"You're blind."

"I am blind?"

"Say, pard, we can't waste no time. We've got to be at the bank, you know, to make a deposit."

"That's so."

"Come, sonny, shell out the difference."

"The what?"

"The difference."

"I don't know what you mean."

"The difference in trade—the money."

"I can't give you my money."

"Just hear him."

"Yes, just hear him."

"You cannot get any money from me."

"We'll have to do it, pard."

"Yes, we'll have to do it."

"Do what?"

"Strangle you. Yes, so say your prayers; make short ones. You are a robber; you have robbed us; you must die. That's our law; yes, we're gypsies, we are, and that's our law."

"Oh, do not harm me."

"We must; yes, it's our law. We must strangle any one who owes us money and don't pay. We're thugs, we are; it's our law."

"I will not give you my money."

"Oh, how foolish you are."

"This joke has gone far enough."

"Yes, our mercy has gone far enough, so shell out."

"Shell out what?"

"Your money."

"I never will."

"Hear him, pard."

"He never will?"

"No, never."

"Then we must proceed."

"Yes, we must proceed."

The two men placed their lantern on the floor; one of them produced a rope and as he did so he said:

"Yes, it's our law; we can't help it, but we're gypsies and it's our law."

"What are you going to do?"

"Strangle you, sonny; yes, strangle you. Don't offer us your money now, it's too late; yes, it's too late. You are doomed to die; it's our law."

Madie betrayed signs of great terror and the two tramps pretended to be very sympathetic, and one of them said:

"We're sorry; we're awful sorry, but we can't help it, unless you shell out."

"Oh, spare me!"

"Shell out, and you're all right."

"I cannot spare the money."

"Sorry, yes, awful sorry; but it's our law, we can't help it."

"It's your law?"

"Yes."

"But there is another law."

"Yes; but that ain't gypsy law."

"Yes, it's universal law."

"Hear him talk, pard. Maybe he's going to New York to study law, eh?"

"There is a law, and to that law I appeal," said Madie.

"We's heard your appeal and we decides against you; yes, we decides against you."

"But the law to which I appeal overshadows every other law."

"Does it now?"

"It does."

"What may be that law?"

"The law of self-defense."

The tramps started and laughed, and one of them said:

"Maybe he's got a gun. Where's your club, pard? We kills guns, we do, sonny. Come, shell out."

Madie changed his tone; all signs of fear and terror disappeared and he said:

"You are a pair of scoundrels."

"Well, now, hear him, pard. Ain't he getting up, eh? He tells us we are a pair of scoundrels, eh? Well, well, according to our law we must impose a fine."

"And according to the law to which I appeal you must collect it."

The two tramps assumed a coaxing tone and said:

"No; don't, sonny, don't; you must not invite hostilities. It's wicked to fight; yes, it's wicked."

"How do you know it's wicked?"

"The Bible says so."

"Does it?"

"Yes."

"And the Bible says you must not steal."

"We ain't going to steal. No, no; we only want to make a trade."

"Oh, come off!"

The tramps stared; they thought they had struck a poor country lad, and there their intended victim was using city slang.

"He's a bad one, pard; hear his language."

"Yes, hear his language."

"We must take him to the spring."

"Yes, we must take him to the spring."

Number two tramp always repeated what number one said.

"Get out of here," exclaimed Madie.

"Eh?"

"Get out of here. You fellers have no right here. I'm the owner as the first squatter. I want to go to sleep."

"Without paying for your lodging?"

"Oh, come off."

"Hear him, pard; hear him."

"Yes, hear him."

"Let's punish him."

"Yes, let's punish him."

One of the tramps stepped forward and made an effort to seize hold of Madie, when the lad let drive and sent the fellow reeling across the shanty, and as tramp number two leaped at him Madie dealt him a rap and that also sent him reeling. They were two big fellows, but, as intimated, weakened by rum and overflesh, while our hero was in the condition of a prize-fighter ready to enter the ring. The two tramps attempted to regain their feet, when Madie leaped at them, and he commenced to kick them over the biggest parts of their pants. The rascals squealed like two stuck pigs, and Madie exclaimed:

"I can't help it, gentlemen; it's according to our law to wollop millionaire thieves when we get a chance."

"Hold on, sonny, hold on," cried one of the tramps.

"Yes; hold on, sonny, hold on," repeated number two.

"This is just jolly," laughed our hero. "It's exercise; yes, its exercise. I am on my way to New York to fight a prize fight, and it's exercise to knock you two whelps around, and it's enjoyable."

"Mercy, mercy," cried the tramps.

"Mercy, you rascals? I am going to beat you to death; yes, beat you to death. It's our law; yes, it's our law."

Madie did beat the fellows in an unmerciful manner to his heart's content. They had ceased all efforts at retaliation; they meekly submitted and pleaded only, and finally Madie said:

"I reckon that will do."

Just as our hero desisted he heard a gun go off. The report sounded but a short distance away from the shanty. The lad stepped out to learn what the trouble was when two men seized him.

"Hold on," shouted our hero, "or I'll hurt you."

The two men did not heed, and a few seconds later our hero was surrounded by a dozen men. Two or three had

gone into the shanty and they came forth leading the two tramps. The men carried plenty of lanterns and our hero asked:

"What does this mean?"

"What does it mean?"

"That's what I asked."

"I reckon you know what it means. We've been on the 'lay' for you fellows."

"There is a mistake here," said Madie.

Our hero had discovered that the men were farmers, and he also discerned that they were after the two tramps, and he realized that it was a piece of hard luck that he had been caught in the company of the two rascals.

"I reckon there is no mistake," said the farmer who appeared to be the spokesman.

The two tramps took in the situation, and they proved themselves to be heartless wretches, as their spokesman said:

"That's our leader. We's innocent, we is. That's the feller who set fire to the barn; yes, he did. We's innocent, we is; we tried to stop him; yes, we did."

"Yes, we did," chimed in tramp number two.

"You miserable rascals, how dare you?" cried Madie indignantly.

"Oh, yes; he was just lamming us for going against him. We were arguing on his wickedness and we didn't hurt him, but he's got us into this trouble. Yes, he did it; he's the one who set fire to the barn."

Madie realized the full danger of his position. Incendiarism is a serious charge, and the country people, when they catch an incendiary, are severe with him. Madie knew the two tramps would swear against him, even to turn State's evidence and save themselves at his expense. If he were once brought before an official he would probably be sent to jail. He thought quickly; he must

do or suffer. He determined to do, and having made up his mind he did it well. He said:

"My friends, listen to me. I am innocent; I never saw these fellows before to-night."

"Oh, hear him. Hasn't he a face?" cried one of the tramps, and his pard echoed:

"Hasn't he a face?"

"These two men found me here, a poor boy, and attempted to rob me."

"What were you doing here?"

"I am tramping to the city."

"There! he admits he is a tramp," cried one of the rascals.

"Yes, I was going to New York. I haven't much money and I am doing it afoot. I was resting in that old building when these fellows came along and they intended to rob me. I was too much for them, the rum-weakened scamps, and now they are turning against me. Please let me go; I am innocent."

"If you are innocent you can prove your innocence before the squire. We can't let you go."

"No, no; don't let him off; he did it. He's a sweet talker, he is; he'll make you believe he is a saint but he was boasting to us to-night how many barns he had set on fire, and we rebuked him."

One of the farmers here interrupted: "Satan rebuking sin."

"Well, we's two poor men, but we're honest, we is; that's true. We are not barn-burners, but that fellow—he is a desperate fellow, he is. Don't let him go. He fired the barn; yes, he did it. We ran away when he fired the barn."

"Yes, we ran away," chimed in number two.

"It's false," said Madie.

"Maybe it is, lad, but we can't decide. You must go

before the squire; he will let you go if you prove your innocence."

"How can I prove it if these two rascals swear against me?"

"The squire can tell."

"But I want to go my way."

"You will be compelled to go with us."

"Madie saw there was no chance for him in pleading, so he said:

"All right; I will go."

The men released their hold upon him for an instant, believing that he had determined to submit, and our hero took advantage of his momentary freedom. He made a sudden dash and ran like a deer, and as he sped away he shouted:

"Those two scoundrels are guilty."

The farmers sent up a shout and started in pursuit, and some of them in their excitement and frenzy discharged their guns. They did not take aim, however, only fired at random, and Madie got beyond range. He was a great runner, the champion against man or boy in his native county; indeed he had been the champion as a football player, and away he went, the men in pursuit. He outsped them, however, and two hours later felt that he could take a rest. He had walked and ran for two good hours, as stated, and he was pretty well exhausted.

After an hour's rest the lad started on, and dawn found him at least fifteen miles from the place where the men had sought to arrest him.

CHAPTER IV.

MADIE ENTERS THE GREAT CITY AND ENCOUNTERS AN
ADVENTURE.

OUR hero's robust health and strength had stood him well in hand under the circumstances, and he felt proud of his achievements. He was not what may be called a goody-goody fellow, one of those chaps who are so good that they are good for nothing—on the contrary he was a lad who enjoyed fun, even when it was obtained through a little mischief. He was neither hateful nor malignant in his temperament, but he was, all in all, a lively fellow, and, as our readers have learned, courageous and active.

Owing to the charge of having set a barn on fire Madie did not take a train at the point he had originally intended. He was aware that the telegraph could travel faster than man or train, and he feared he might be arrested under conditions where escape would be impossible. He traveled all day, and at night entered quite a town. He was passing along, when suddenly a potato came hurtling through the air and struck him square on the ear, and upon turning he beheld three young fellows, of about his own age, standing in front of a cigar store. They were laughing, and one of them called out:

"Hello, country. Did it hurt?"

It is strange how there are degrees in all the relations of life. The young fellows who fired at Madie considered him a countryman. Well, these same lads in a larger city would be looked upon as countrymen themselves, and so on until the great city is reached.

Madie was mad, but he kept cool; he did not mean to

let the fellows have all the laugh. He stood and looked at them sharply. He was fixing their features in his mind; he intended to get square. One of the lads approached him and demanded:

"Hello; what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"I thought something was the matter."

"No, I don't need the doctor; I'm healthy."

"Then what are you staring at?"

"I'll tell you."

"Go ahead."

"I got hit."

"Did you?"

"Yes."

"Who lit you?"

"I think it was a meteorite, it came with such force."

The other two boys had come along in time to hear what Madie said, and they all laughed.

"It wasn't a stone, bub."

"Oh! it wasn't?"

"No."

"It came pretty hard."

"Yes, it was a good shot."

"A good shot?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you want to know?"

"Yes."

"I fired it."

"You did?"

"Yes."

"Had I done anything to you?"

"No."

"Why did you shoot something at me?"

"For fun."

"Oh! for fun?"

"Yes, country. Don't you like it?"

"I suppose I must like it for the present."

"Where are you from?"

"A long way from here, and I hope to get a long way the other side of here if the way you treated me is a sample of the people around here."

"Don't you like the people around here?"

"No."

"Then 'git.'"

"I will."

"Git away quick."

The fellow advanced in a threatening manner.

"Did I ever do anything to offend you?"

"Yes, you did."

"When?"

"A little while ago."

"I did?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"You're too smart."

"Well, do you find fault with a fellow for being smart?"

"Yes, when he's too smart."

"All right; I'll try and not be so smart in future."

Madie moved on, and as he did so the fellow who claimed to have fired the potato gave him a kick. Our hero did not resent the kick at the time, and the other fellow gave him a kick also.

Our hero had not said anything offensive, but his manner, it appears, was not quite meek enough for the three young lads of the town.

"I'll give those chaps a little of our mountain style before the night's over. I don't fancy being kicked and cuffed in that manner, but I mean to do it right, just right, and I'll succeed."

Madie walked along through the town and passed beyond until he came to a place under a bridge; there he calculated he might lodge for the night. He still had his pack with him on his back. He had not started out with much of a wardrobe, knowing that he was going to the city. He had deferred fitting out until he reached New York.

"Now then, I'll get ready to serve out those fellows who have had their turn at me."

He pulled off his bundle, took off his boots and also his stockings, and as he did so he said:

"I reckon this will serve to fix those chaps just right. They had their turn at me, I'll take my turn at them."

Madie took his pair of woolen stockings and filled them with green slime from the edge of a pool near the river. Having filled them and put his traps nicely away under the bridge he said:

"Now, I reckon I am ready."

He slowly walked back to the town and soon arrived near the place where he had been kicked by the three boys. The latter were still standing in front of the cigar store, and as Madie approached one of them said:

"Here comes country again."

Madie walked along, and the three lads approached him and one of them asked:

"What are you doing here again?"

"I've left something."

"You have?"

"Yes."

"What did you leave?"

"If I were to tell you I do not believe you would understand."

"Say, you're getting sassy again."

"Am I?"

"Yes."

"Well, suppose I am."

"We won't have it."

"What have you got to say about it, anyhow?"

"Eh? what's that you say?"

"I said putty."

"You said putty?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Don't you know?"

"I don't."

"I said putty."

"Yes."

"Well, don't you catch on?"

"No."

"I'll tell you."

"Do, quick."

"I'll tell you and I'll show you."

"Will you?"

"Yes, I will."

"Do so."

"I said putty."

"Yes."

"Well, that means put it to 'em, see;" and as Madie spoke he brought one of the stockings around and slashed the speaker over the head. The fellow went down.

"And now I'll explain," said Madie, and he let the other two fellows have it ere they recovered from their surprise at the manner in which their companion had been served.

Bang! bang! they got, and Madie kept saying: "That's putty—putting it to 'em, see. You fellows wanted to serve out a countryman, didn't you? Well, you had your turn; now it's my turn. This is what I left—revenge; this is what I came back after—revenge;" and with each repetition of the word revenge he let one of them have it, and as the stockings permitted the slime to ooze through at each blow they were sorry-looking objects.

"So you fellows don't like countrymen? Maybe you'll like 'em better after to-night; at least you'll remember one mountain lad, anyhow; good-night."

Madie had calculated he would have to run for it, but the fellows were so blinded with the slime they could not make a fight, only get the mud out of their eyes and ears, and our hero walked deliberately away after repeating:

"Now you know what putty means."

Madie walked back to his refuge under the bridge, but after a time concluded it was better to go on to the open country beyond the town. He was not looking for any further adventures; but, alas! it appeared as though he were destined to spend the night in scimmages. He had walked about a mile beyond the town when he heard shouts and peals of laughter, and he became assured that a party of young men and women were approaching on their way to or from some sort of festivity and frolic. The lad had no reason to anticipate that the party would interfere with him and kept on his way; but, alas! there are so many smart Alecs abroad, and it chanced that with the party approaching there was a youth who was always attempting something extra smart, and upon this occasion he was particularly anxious to exploit himself before the girls in the party. Madie walked along and met the merry crowd right near the banks of the creek which the good people called a river. The moment smart Alec beheld the little tramp marching along with his pack on his back it was suggested that he might make a little show. He halted our hero right by the river bank, as stated, and demanded:

"Hello, Mister Tramp, where are you going?"

The girls all gathered around to see and hear the fun.

Madie did not immediately reply, and the smart Alec again demanded:

"Do you hear me—where did you come from? Where are you going?"

"I came from nowhere and I am going to the other side of the same place," at length answered Madie.

The girls all giggled; they were rather pleased to see the Alec get a setback. The latter, however, did not mean to be set back, and he demanded:

"Are you a regular?"

"A regular what?"

"Tramp."

"Unlike you, I am not."

Again the girls all giggled.

"See here, mister, you're too smart.

"You are not smart enough, save in your own estimation."

"What's that?"

"Oh, come off! you're soft, you are."

The girls giggled, and so did the other young men present, for they also were glad to see Mister Smart Alec "get it in the neck," as they said.

"Do you know what we do with tramps in this town?"

"I'd know more than you if I knew anything," said Madie.

"You're smart, ain't you?"

"I'd be a dullard if I weren't smarter than you."

"I am going to duck you."

"Oh, don't."

"Yes, I will. Can you swim?"

"Can you?" retorted our hero.

"Yes, I can."

"I am glad."

"You are?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Well, you'll learn if you attempt to duck me, that's all."

The other young fellows present, believing that the

tramp was a good one and anxious to see their comrade taken down, urged him on.

One of them said:

"He's too much for you."

Another said:

"He defies you. Don't take it; I wouldn't."

"Well, you bet I don't mean to take it. I am going to duck him."

"Don't," pleaded Madie.

"I'll duck you sure."

"I haven't done anything to you."

"Yes, you have."

"I have?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"You were saucy to me."

"I was?"

"Yes."

"But you forget I was going on about my business when you commenced to talk to me."

"I had a right to talk to you."

"Then I had a right to talk back."

"And because you did talk back I am going to duck you."

"When?"

"Right away."

"To-night?"

"Yes, this minute."

"Oh, don't."

"I will."

"Let's see you."

"Eh? do you hear?" called one of the others. "He is defying you; he dares you."

"I really don't want to hurt him."

"You won't hurt him if you duck him."

"He may take cold."

"I reckon you feel cold," said the jeerer.

Madie made a step forward, intending to move on, when the fellow made a rush for him and jumped on his back and shoulders with a shout. Our hero, as our readers know, was a powerful chap. He at once clapped his hands around the fellow who was tormenting him, pinned the tormentor so he could not dismount, and then with a shout made a rush and a dive straight into the river, carrying his persecutor with him. Well, there went up a shout; the men yelled with laughter and the girls shouted also with glee. It was one of the best tricks any of them had ever seen. The moment Madie struck the water he managed to shake off the fellow who had threatened to duck him. The smart Alec was a good swimmer, and rising to the surface made for the river bank, while Madie jeered him and also swam for the shore. When they both scrambled up smart Alec made a rush for the stranger and received a punch square in the eyes that toppled him over in a heap. No one interfered; the fellow's companions appeared to enjoy his discomfiture. Smart Alec was game, however, for the time being, owing to the fact that the girls were all witnesses of the scrimmage, and he made a second rush at Madie and a second time received a punch that downed him, and the last rap was just hard enough to settle him and take all the spunk out of him. He did not attempt another assault and Madie, with the remark: "You know more now than you did before you met me," moved on.

Our hero was wet through and it was a season in the year when heavy dews fell.

"Hang the fellow," muttered our hero as he trudged along, "I am getting chilled and I may yet pay for my fun."

Madie at length came to a dense strip of wood. He

struck a path that led him to its center, when he kindled a fire, stripped and commenced to dry his clothes. He finally succeeded, and later found a temporary shelter where he turned in to sleep through the balance of the night.

CHAPTER V.

OUR HERO REACHES NEW YORK AND MEETS WITH FRESH ADVENTURES.

MADIE arose bright and early on the following morning and trudged along until late in the afternoon when he reached a railway station and succeeded in securing passage on a train which was due in New York about ten o'clock.

Strangely enough, when considering his preceding experience, he reached the city without encountering any further adventures; but once in New York the fun commenced. It appeared as though he were fated to pass from one scrimmage to another.

As has been intimated, Madie was pretty well posted, through reading, concerning the various devices resorted to by New York criminals to rob and delude the unwary, and our hero had not been off the train three minutes when a fellow approached him.

"Do you want a good hotel to stop over in?" asked the stranger.

The latter was a natural question and did not savor of any design. Our hero felt that after all his rough experience it would do him good to sleep on a good soft bed for at least one night, and he calculated also that it would be well to have a temporary home from where to arrange for his campaign, and he answered:

"Maybe your lodging house is too expensive for me."

"It is the cheapest lodging house in the town. It is

un by a Christian association for young strangers. I am their agent to look for young men arriving in the city. Everything is nice and clean, and the cost is a mere nothing, comparatively."

"How much does it cost?"

"Fifteen cents for a room all to yourself."

"And is it a nice clean place?"

"Clean as a lady's boudoir. You see I am the agent of the society; it was organized to provide a temporary home for respectable young strangers arriving in the city. You will be perfectly safe."

Madie looked the agent over; he was certainly a very respectable and really benevolent looking man, plainly dressed, and bore every evidence of honesty. Madie believed he was in luck; he relied upon his own discernment and judgment as to appearances, and he said:

"All right; I am very glad I met you. I want a lodging place for a few days."

"Where is your baggage?"

"Here," answered the lad, and he pointed to the bundle which he had removed from his back on entering the train, and which he had since carried in his hand.

"Have you no other baggage?"

"No, sir."

"Will you go with me?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right; just wait a moment until I see if there any more young strangers who came in on the train."

The man walked away and Madie congratulated himself upon finding a good Christian man right at the start. The gentleman rejoined him a moment later and said:

"I guess you were the only young stranger on the train who needs our shelter for to-night. We will go; shall I carry your pack?"

"No, sir; I can take care of it."

The two walked along and the stranger said:

"It is very perilous for young strangers arriving in this great city, who have no friends to go to at once."

"Yes, sir, but I am pretty well able to care for myself."

"That is good; yes, that is good. What part of the country did you come from?"

Madie answered frankly that he came from a mountain village up in New York State.

"You have come to New York to reside permanently?"

"I don't know yet."

"If you are seeking employment we may aid you in case you can satisfy us of your absolute honesty and trustworthiness."

"I may not need employment at once."

"Then you have plenty of money?"

"No; but I have enough to take care of me for a few weeks, I reckon, if I don't live extravagantly."

"You must try to be very economical."

"I will be compelled to do so."

"We care for a great many young men; yes, all classes, in case they are honest, and you may be shocked at first when you see some of our lodgers; but it's the poor and friendless we seek to aid."

"That is very good of your society."

"Yes; and here we are."

The exterior of the building before which the man stopped presented a very respectable appearance. Our hero was led up a stairway and ushered into a large reading-room, where there were tables and seats, and at one end of the room was the office and registering book. Our hero's guide led him to the office and introduced him to a man who appeared to be the clerk.

"There is only one lodger for us to-right," said the guide, "but he appears to be a very honest young man."

"Register," said the clerk.

Madie obeyed, but he did not like the looks of the clerk, he bore none of the general characteristics such as one would expect to recognize in the registry clerk of a charity lodging house.

"You can pay me now," said the man.

"How much?"

"Fifteen cents, unless you want a separate room."

"This gentleman said I could have a separate room for fifteen cents."

"Yes, I told him he could have a room all to himself," said the guide.

"All right, take him to twenty-two."

Madie was led upstairs. All appeared straight and right, but he was taking observations all the same, owing to the appearance and manner of the clerk. He was led into a room that hardly answered to the description he had received from the guide, but as he was tired and sleepy he determined not to question the surroundings.

"Do you wish to send your money down for safety, with the clerk?"

"No; I thought you said there was no danger here."

"Well, as a rule you are safe, but we can never tell. You know, sometimes we may admit wolves in sheep's clothing. You can do as you please, but I would suggest that you let the clerk take care of your money."

"No, I will take care of the little I have."

"Very well; there's your candle, put it out and be sure it is extinguished when you get ready for bed."

"All right, sir, all right."

The man left the room and Madie was alone. He looked around the room carefully and critically, and finally muttered:

"It's all right, I reckon, but things do not look exactly like a home for strangers. I reckon it's a speculation after all, but that fellow had to say all the good things he could

to get a customer. It will do me for to-night, and to-morrow I will take observations."

Madie at length turned in after blowing out his candle as directed, and soon fell asleep. How long he slept he never knew, but he was aroused from his sleep by hearing some one in his room. His life as a hunter boy and his experience during the time he was tramping to New York constituted him a light sleeper. He had been compelled to be on the alert and the slightest sound was liable to arouse him. He opened his eyes, but made no noise; he tried, however, to penetrate the darkness and locate the party in his room, for he felt assured that indeed there was an intruder.

As our readers know, the lad was a resolute fellow. He did not inquire, "Who is there?" lest the intruder might "skip." The lad did not propose to give him a chance, so he quietly slipped the bedclothing down and suddenly leaped from the bed. He could not distinctly see the party in the room, but a keen instinct located the party sufficiently well for our hero to make a grab. He did so and indeed he clasped a human form.

"Hello!" he cried, "what are you doing here?"

"I am going to bed," came the answer.

"Going to bed?"

"Yes."

"My friend, I reckon you are in the wrong room."

As Madie spoke he received a rap on the head from a soft club. An instant he was stunned, but before a second blow could be dealt he leaped to one side, and then calculating as to distance and aim he let drive, and his calculation proved correct, for he knocked somebody sprawling to the floor. The lad leaped to where he had left his candle, and he also had placed some matches handy. He struck a match and sought to light the candle but the party whom he had knocked down threw something which

struck our hero's hand and extinguished the sputtering blue flame of the match. Madie at once sprang across the room and dealt the fellow a kick that seemingly paralyzed him and caused him to lie still; then the lad again struck a match and succeeded without interference in lighting the candle. He glanced toward the man whom he had kicked over and recognized the respectable-looking fellow who had been his guide.

"You rascal," cried the lad, "so you are a robber, eh, after all?"

Madie was going for the man when the door suddenly opened. There was a gas jet in the hall and the light flashed in and together with the candle illuminated the room.

"Seize that fellow," cried the man whom Madie had knocked down.

A fellow whom our hero recognized as the clerk had rushed into the room.

"What is the matter?" he demanded.

"Seize that fellow. He forced his way into this room and attempted to rob me. He knocked me down when I attempted to seize him."

Our hero was no fool; he perceived on the instant that he had been inveigled into a "snide" lodging house and that an attempt had been made to rob him. Well, he was a terror when accused. The clerk also was apparently a powerful fellow and he made a dash for the lad, but was met by a blow that staggered him. The fellow evidently had not calculated upon meeting such a stout reception from a mere country boy.

Madie realized that he must get in his work quickly and get away. Fortunately he had retired with his pants on and his bundle lay handy. He was in light marching order; it was the fear of fire that had led him to be ready for a sudden exit in case of any emergency.

The man whom he had kicked had managed to rise to his feet and he made an attempt to deal the lodger a blow from behind. Madie turned suddenly; he was, like most country-bred lads, a terrible high kicker, and he let his foot fly, caught his man under the chin and nearly raised him to the ceiling. When the man landed he toppled over and lay still, *hors du combat*; there was nothing more to fear from him—he was done up. The clerk remained and he was a different chap to deal with.

The incidents described all transpired within a minute, and Madie had just time to turn from the fellow he had kicked in the chin when the clerk a second time made a rush for him.

Neither of our hero's assailants had made an outcry, neither had Madie. He made a lick at the clerk, but the latter warded off the blow and caught our hero a stinger on the forehead. Madie reeled but did not fall. The clerk followed up to deal him a second stinger, when the lad made a dive head first; his head struck the clerk square in the pit of the stomach. Our hero's last move was a peculiarly country trick and it proved effective, for with a grunt and a groan the robber clerk doubled up and fell to the floor. He too was momentarily all done up.

It was the boy's chance; he seized his coat, waistcoat and bundle, and leaping over the prostrate clerk reached the hall, where he met a man rushing toward him. Believing the latter to be one of the gang Madie gave him a swinging clip with his bundle. The man fell and commenced to shout and yell for help; indeed he cried murder, fire, and everything else. Our hero, however, did not wait; he bolted along the hall, reached the stairs and went down practically in two jumps. He ran through the reading-room and made for the stairs that led to the street, and down he sped, or rather leaped, and suddenly he struck against some one and he and the man he had run against

went rolling down together, over and over. The hall was well illuminated, for it claimed to be an all-night house, in fact always open, and in the whirl the country boy was just able to distinguish blue clothes and brass buttons. He was not hurt when he and his tumbling companion reached the bottom of the steps. The policeman, however, had not fared so well; he lay still while our hero rose to his feet and dashed into the street, and a passer-by seeing a man running in his shirt sleeves, carrying a bundle, set up the cry of "Stop thief!"

"Great ginger!" ejaculated the fleeing youth, "now I am in for it;" for as he ran he could hear the pedestrian who had set up the cry clattering after him.

"I must settle that fellow or he will have the whole town after me."

The man was running at a furious rate. Madie darted from the sidewalk, just missed a swinging sign by a hair, but his pursuer was not so fortunate, and went head on against the sign and fell insensible to the gutter. But, alas! another man had joined in the chase and Madie, being in a poor neighborhood, turned down a side street, and he could hear shouts behind him, when suddenly there leaped up from the very sidewalk, as it were, a lad who called:

"Give me your hand, Chummie, give me your hand. I'll tow you into port."

Our hero was so excited he hardly knew what he was doing and a friendly voice was pleasant to his ears.

"What do you want?" he asked as he ran.

"The cops are after you, eh, Chummie? Let me guide; I know a hiding place. We'll give 'em the slip. It's dark down here; they can't see where we turn off."

Madie appeared to take in the situation. He recognized that a street gamin who knew all the coverts well had come to his aid.

"All right," he said, "you lead the way."

"Run in here, quick."

The little stranger actually seized our hero and swerved him up an alleyway, and as they advanced the boy said:

"Now we're all right. Hear 'em; they've run past the alley. They didn't see us. Good enough; we're all right now, eh? Hear de cop, how he strikes his rattler. eh? what yer been doin'? You ain't stole nothin', have yer?"

"No."

"Well, yer all right, take it easy. We'll just lay low here a bit till they gets well away."

Madie was glad to stop and take breath. His exertions and his run had almost winded him.

The lad led Madie into a hallway and said:

"Here we are."

"Do you live here?"

"No; this is too stylish a place for me."

They were in total darkness, but from the odors that our hero caught and for general observation, he calculated it was not a very stylish house.

"Say, you've got a bundle there."

"Yes."

"Got a change of clothes?"

Our hero had taken in the whole situation and knew that he could answer the gamin, his rescuer, truthfully, and he said:

"Yes."

"Good enough; get into the new duds and they won't recognize yer."

"I won't change now."

"Why not?"

"I can't see what I am doing."

"That's so. Well, come with me; I know how we can get out of this. I've given the cops a false 'steer' many a time."

The boy and our hero stepped from the hallway and

walked a little piece up the narrow court, when the guide said:

"Here we are. We can go through this cellar, get into a back yard and strike daylight again in the next street."

"We may get caught."

"Caught?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Going into some one's cellar."

"Well, you leave that to me. You have a better chance of getting caught if those cops come back and take in this allyeway, so we will get away from here. It's all right, I know the way; follow me."

Madie did not suspect treachery or design. There are times when the indices plainly demonstrate the truth, and here was a case in point. Our hero had not yet clearly seen the features of his ragged little conductor, and yet he had a positive intuition of safety.

The little gamin went down through a cellar window and Madie followed. They groped their way through a dark, damp cellar and through a narrow break in the wall between two buildings, and after creeping some distance further they issued forth through a coal hole to the street.

"Now you are all hunky," said the lad in a cheerful tone.

"What's your name, my friend?"

"Oh, I'm Patsy."

"What's your last name?"

"Patsy Ryan."

"Where do you live?"

The lad laughed and answered:

"I live the way the flies live."

"How's that?"

"Catch a bite where I can and lodge nearest to where I am when night comes."

"Do you mean to tell me you have no home?"

"I haven't any home."

"Where were you born?"

"Here in New York."

"Have you no parents?"

"My parents have been dead several years."

"How old are you?"

"Fourteen."

"And you have no home?"

"Nary a home."

"And how do you support yourself?"

"Any way and every way. Sometimes I sell papers, sometimes I carry baggage; don't do nothin' regular, but always ready to earn a cent when I can."

"You know New York pretty well?"

"You bet I do."

"You know New York well?"

"I know a great deal, I do, more than they give me credit for, I reckon. They sometimes call me silly; the boys call me crazy Ryan. That's the reason I don't sell papers and stay with 'em. They hunt me down, so I just lay around by myself—but I'm no fool and some day they'll find it out. I've been to school, I have—night school—and I'm going to be a lawyer some day, and I may save some of those fellers who've been calling me crazy from jail some day."

Madie saw that Patsy was indeed anything but a fool. The lad had already done him a good service, and he said:

"Where will you lodge to-night?"

"Oh, I've got a bully place."

"Where?"

"Under the docks, where they've got big piles of lumber; it's a bully place. Do you want to turn in with me?"

"Yes, I do."

"All right, come along; I'll lodge you."

The two proceeded down to the river and our hero had

his first real glimpse into underground life in New York. Madie was tough; he could stand what any one else could, and he lay down and rested as peacefully as he would have done in a feather bed.

CHAPTER VI.

MADIE STARTS IN ON HIS QUEST.

MADIE was the first to awake, and he rose to a sitting position and looked at the little fellow beside him as the latter slept. He beheld a good, honest Irish face, features the set of which indicated good sense instead of a lack. He did not disturb the sleeper, but let him sleep on, and employed the time thinking over the novelty of the situation, and while thus meditating he formed his plans.

In good time Patsy awoke and our hero said:

"Come, we will go and get a breakfast."

"How?"

"I've got a little money."

"You get your breakfast, I can get my own."

"You can?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Oh, there's a big house up on the avenue; I carry in the ash barrels and the girls there always give me a hunk of bread. Come along, I can get a hunk big enough to divide with you."

"No, you will go with me this morning. You know a place where we can get some coffee and cakes?"

"You bet I do; come along."

The boys hustled out from their bunking place and proceeded to one of the avenues, where they found a coffee

and cake house. They entered and had a good square meal of rolls, sausage and coffee, and when they stepped out upon the street Madie said:

"Patsy, I'll have use for you, and I've got an idea."

"Then you've got more than they ever gave me credit for having."

Our hero laughed and said:

"Can't we hire a cheap room somewhere?"

The gamin's eyes opened wide.

"Hire a room?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"You will have to pay four dollars a month for a room."

"That's all right."

"In advance."

"That's all right."

"Have you got four dollars?"

"Yes."

"Well, come along."

Patsy led our hero to a big tenement house. They found the agent and Madie soon managed to hire a room on the top floor front for four dollars per month, in advance. He paid the money and got the key. Patsy led him to a second-hand store where he purchased a couple of cots, some bedclothing, a table, a couple of chairs, a little charcoal stove, and cups, plates, saucers, and a few other little articles necessary for bachelor housekeeping, and by noon he and Patsy were duly installed in their room. They cooked a nice little meal and had a jolly time.

Madie had studied his companion well and was satisfied as to his honesty and loyalty, and as it will be developed he made no mistake.

Madie bought some second-hand clothes for Patsy and himself, and did all with a comparatively small expenditure of money.

Our hero looked quite scrumptious, as the country peo-

ple say, and Patsy looked quite well, though neither approached at all near the borders of dudedom.

"Patsy," said Madie, when their meal was over, "I am going to leave you here awhile. I must go and make a call."

Our hero had the direction, and by inquiring the way succeeded in finding the house of Mrs. Metcalf. He introduced himself and announced that he had business in the city and had come to make more particular inquiries as to the fate of Addie Velkanau.

"I am glad you have come. I did not wish to write all that I suspected. I fear a terrible fate has overtaken the girl."

"Will you tell me all the circumstances?"

"I will. Addie's mother was my friend, and when I heard of the death of both parents I thought it would be a good idea to bring Addie to the city, as I knew her parents did not leave any money for her support, and the girl was reared in too delicate a manner to undertake a maid-of-all-work position in the country."

"You knew her parents well?"

"I knew her mother. I had but little acquaintance with her father. All I learned about him was from Addie's mother. I believe he was American born, but his parents and Addie's grandparents were French. Addie's father may have been born in France; if so he was brought to America at a very early age. He was splendidly educated and a very worthy man. Addie's mother was an orphan, and it was not known whether she had any relatives. She was adopted and educated by people who were not her relatives, and she was a teacher when she met Velkanau. That is about all I know of her father, and indeed of her mother."

"And now how about Addie?"

"She came here to live with me and determined to

come both a musician and an artist. She possessed remarkable talents in both directions. I determined to give her very advantage that I could. I earned my own living as a teacher; I have no one dependent upon me. I am a widow; I was a teacher when I married Mr. Metcalf, and after his death I resumed teaching. I have a little money and thought it a good investment to cultivate Addie's talents."

"Of whom did she take lessons in music?"

"She took lessons of a lady."

"And in painting?"

"She took lessons of an Italian."

"She was very handsome."

"Yes, she was a remarkably pretty girl. I would have wished for her own sake that she had been less beautiful, for it is hard for a girl who is poor and beautiful and compelled to work for her livelihood."

"It might have been better for Addie to have remained in the country."

"I will admit that now I feel it would have been."

"Tell me about her disappearance."

"She left the house one morning to go and take her painting lesson. She never arrived at the house of the artist."

Madie was thoughtful a moment and then said:

"The Italian says she never arrived?"

"Yes."

"I do not like these Italians."

"I suspected him, and I placed the matter in the hands of competent detectives."

"And what do they report?"

"They confirm the statements of the Italian; they declare that he is innocent."

"That is, they have established the fact that she never arrived at his music room?"

"Yes."

"That does not satisfactorily dispose of the suspicion that he knows something about her."

"You are quite a detective," remarked Mrs. Metcalf.

"I am here in New York to find Addie or solve the mystery of her fate; that is my business. I will know where she is or what became of her; but tell me: did the detectives have no theory?"

"Yes."

"What is their theory?"

"They have established the fact that several men were seen prowling around and watching this house for several days, and with other evidence that they have obtained it is their conclusion that the fair girl was abducted. Alas! I'd rather they had found her dead."

"Have they given up the search for her?"

"No; I have offered five hundred dollars reward for any definite information, and they are still on the lookout."

"But have failed in finding any clew?"

"Yes."

"What is the name of the artist?"

"His name is Albert Carilla."

"What do you know about his character?"

"Very little; he is a man about five-and-thirty, very handsome, unmarried, but bears an excellent reputation."

"Has he displayed any particular interest in the fate of Addie?"

"Strangely enough, he has not."

"You say strangely enough?"

"Yes."

"Why do you say so?"

"He was so enthusiastic over her voice and her beauty I did think it strange that he did not display more interest in the fact of her disappearance."

Madie attached considerable importance to this fact, but

he did not say much. He made up his mind, however, that he would know why the Italian displayed so little interest.

"Can you give me the name of one of the detectives who were on the case?"

"There was only one really on the case."

"And his name was——"

"Dielman."

"A German?"

"Of German descent."

"Is he a member of the regular detective force?"

"He was once, but I believe that he is now connected with a private agency."

Madie made many inquiries concerning the fact that men had had Mrs. Metcalf's house under surveillance and finally decided to go away.

"If I can be of any service to you, *Mister Heath*," said the lady, "call on me."

"If I need your assistance I will do so."

"You may call on me for a little money if you secure any particular clew and find yourself unable to follow it up."

"Thank you, madam; I do not think I will need any money, but I am very grateful for your interest."

"I may say the same to you. Addie now is really more to me than to any one else."

"Possibly that is true, but I shall solve the mystery of her disappearance."

Madie returned to his lodging and after a long spell of meditation determined to consult Patsy. He had come to the conclusion that Patsy was a wonderfully shrewd little chap. He had been an observant fellow, and having been compelled to knock around and take care of himself all his life he had become educated in practical matters far beyond his years. Our hero told all the facts to Patsy, and when the narrative was concluded he asked:

"Well, Patsy, what do you think of it?"

"You want a straight opinion?"

"Yes."

"The Italian knows all about the girl; on that you can bet your bottom dollar."

"That is your opinion?"

"Yes, it is; and I am right, you bet. Those Italians are very sly, eh? She was a pretty girl; well, you go for him."

"But the detective says he knows nothing about her, that she never arrived at his rooms that morning."

"Oh, no, that's all right; but he knows all about her. If he had any purpose he would not have her reach his rooms. No, no, he would be certain that suspicion would settle on him. No, no, that's all right; but he knows all about the girl, you bet."

"Patsy, you and I must solve the mystery."

"We can try it, and we must get on to the track of the Italian."

"But the detective says he knows nothing about her."

"That depends upon who the detective is. Some of those fellows are on the make every time."

"This detective's name is Dielman."

"Oh, I know him. He was fired off the regular force, and he works with a private agency now. He's no good, he puts his hands behind him every time with the palms out and the fingers jingling, and whoever stops the jingling with the biggest quod gets his service. That's him; I know that fellow."

"Who would stop the jingling, Patsy?"

"Maybe the Italian, maybe some one else; but we will get on to the Italian."

"When shall we start out to do so?"

"Any time. But see here, you are going to play a detective game?"

"Yes."

"Then you will have to learn the science of transforms."

"What's that—disguises?"

"Yes, you bet."

"I have been thinking of that. We can go under cover, as they call it, later on."

"That ain't my idea."

"What is your idea?"

"Go under cover from the start; then as you uncover your disguise is more perfect. You see, when you go under cover you don't act natural like, and when you doff the cover you come down to your natural gait. Now, if they get on to you at your natural gait they can follow you under cover; but if you go the disguise and then come the natural gait they ain't so likely to get on to a pointer to trail you on. I tell you it's the right game to go the disguise first and work the 'cover' as long as you can. You can always fall back to the natural."

"Patsy, you're right. What disguise shall I work?"

"The countryman, if well played, is always a good one."

"I should do that well, for I am a countryman."

"All right; don't make any mistake. I've seen some of these countrymen who were immense in every way; it's a good disguise. Come the western man on 'em—that's the tune. You will have lots of fun and pick up a good deal that you ain't looking for. Yes, that's your 'rig.'"

The two lads spent the following three days in making up their "rigs," as Patsy called their disguises, and our hero found the Irish-American New York gamin of great service to him. His suggestions were all excellent and betrayed a wonderful knowledge of human nature; indeed his shrewdness was so marked Madie was led to exclaim:

"I don't see, Patsy, how any of them could ever have called you crazy."

Patsy laughed in his peculiar manner and answered:

"I do."

"Tell me why they called you crazy."

"I had too many ideas in my head."

"But I thought you said they never gave you credit for ideas?"

"Well, they didn't."

"Then what do you mean?"

"My ideas were so far ahead in the future they didn't call 'em ideas—they called 'em visions, cranky notions, and all that. Yes, that's how I got to be called crazy; I had too many ideas, and I'll tell you something: when any man has ideas that other people don't understand they always call him a crank, see. Well, I'd rather be called crazy than stupid any time."

"You're all right, Patsy."

On the third day the lads were ready to issue forth. They went up to the vicinity of where the Italian's music rooms were located. Patsy had a great many detective ideas and he was constantly shooting forth suggestions. The lads lay around until night, when they trailed the Carilla to his boarding house, and they hung around until he came out in the evening, and again they followed upon his trail. They had fortified themselves with sandwiches and were prepared to lay around on an all-night hunt if necessary.

As stated, they followed the Italian down to a certain neighborhood and then Patsy remarked:

"Madie, we're on to him."

"What do you mean, Patsy?"

"We're on to him."

"Explain."

"Watch him."

"I am watching him."

"Don't you catch on?"

"No."

"Watch him."

"I tell you I am watching him."

"And you don't catch on?"

"No."

"He's watching."

"He is?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Don't you see? He's going somewhere; he don't want to be seen; he is on the lookout every minute. He is up to something, and I've got his trick. He has the girl concealed somewhere and he is going to pay her a visit. Yes, I knew when we got on the Italian's track and followed him close we'd find the girl. We'll find her, you bet."

There came a terrible look in Madie's eyes, and he gritted his teeth as he exclaimed:

"If we do find her we must find her as she was when she left the mountains, save a few weeks older. If we don't, then, Mister Italian, your days—ay, your hours—are numbered. No law for your punishment, I'll take care of that. Yes, let us find her the Addie she was when I last saw her or——"

"Hold on, Madie, don't make any rash promises. You don't want to hang."

"Yes, I do," returned Madie in decided and emphatic tones.

"Well, don't do the hanging act just yet, Madie; wait until we know all about it. Maybe we're wrong; we'll wait and see."

The Italian, meantime, kept upon his way and finally stopped before a deserted-looking house in a neighborhood where there were factories and business houses only. It was a building that had once been in the olden time a palatial residence, but at the time of which we write it was

about the only building that had not been turned into a business warehouse.

As intimated, the Italian stopped before this house, and Patsy observed:

"See, Madie, he is looking around. He does not wish to be seen."

"The villain!" said Madie; "he has Addie concealed in that house. Well, all right; let him go in, we will follow."

"What will you do, Madie?"

"I'll go into that house."

"Not with my consent."

"Why not?"

"Why, that fellow would kill you like a rat; those Italians are terrible fellows. No, no; you will not enter that house."

"Do you think I am afraid of an Italian, Patsy?"

"No, I do not believe you are afraid of anything, but rashness is worse than cowardice sometimes. Coolness and courage and judgment combined are better to do business on, you bet, every time."

"I will rescue Addie at all hazards."

"Oh, that's all right; but make sure first that Addie is there. You have no proof, we are working on suspicion now."

"I am certain."

"I am pretty certain too, but we have no proof. We must make sure."

"How can we make sure?"

"We'll 'pipe' the house, see."

"And then?"

"We'll find out something and when we have made sure that the girl is there we will arrange our plans for the rescue. We must not take any risk before we know there is something that calls for risk."

"Patsy, you're beating considerable sense into my head."

"I am only giving you the benefit of my experience knocking around New York, that's all. I tell you I've learned something; yes, I have."

"All right. How shall we proceed?"

"The Italian has gone inside."

"Yes."

"He didn't knock or ring; he went in on a signal or a night-key."

"I reckon you are right."

"Well, that means something, and between you and me and the lamp-post I am under the belief we are going to strike something big to-night; yes, something big. And now you've got your pointer, use your wits; you can beat me there. You've ideas, I only know what I've learned."

"Patsy, we'll get right down to business. All your suggestions are good."

"I've had experience, see."

Madie, having got his usual impetuousness under control, was prepared to act with the utmost caution and wisdom. He bade Patsy to lay low and then he made a careful study of the old house, and it was in this line that he excelled. He had learned the science of observation in the woods watching for game, and on a trail, and on studying little indices he was immense.

No light shone in front of the house. The appearance from where our hero stood would indicate that it was a deserted house. Madie finally saw how he could get to the roof of the house by availing himself of the surroundings, and once on the roof he saw how he could manage to gain an adjoining building from whence he could take observations. He joined Patsy and laid out his plan.

"Where you lead," said Patsy, "I will follow."

"No need, Patsy."

"Oh, yes; it's all right."

"It will take some very perilous climbing."

"I can climb like a monkey."

"Then there may follow discovery and there may be a fight."

"And that's just when you will need me. I will go on to the roof with you and then we can decide what we will do next. You lead the way, I will follow."

"No time to lose, Patsy."

"Climb away, I'll follow."

Madie started in after taking a look to learn if his movements were watched. The road appeared to be all clear, and away Madie went and soon gained the roof. Patsy was not far behind, and soon both the daring lads were on the roof. They crossed over and gained the rear of the adjoining building, from whence they could make observations, as they said.

The lads had been in their new position but a few moments when suddenly there appeared a light in one of the rooms on the second floor, and shadows could be seen on the white muslin curtains. The outlines of the form of a man were distinctly visible, and the lads watched with thrilling intentness. They could see the man walk to and fro across the room, and then they saw him, as it appeared, kneel beside a bed. Madie said, in a husky voice:

"Patsy, it's true."

"What is true?"

"Addie is that man's victim."

"We have no proof yet."

"Yes, we have excellent proof."

"I don't agree with you."

The lads watched and the figure of the man disappeared, and then both boys turned deathly pale as a shrill scream rang out upon the night air. Madie leaped to his feet and it appeared as though he would have attempted a leap like a cat from where he stood to the lintel of the window of the room whence the scream appeared to come. Patsy seized hold of him.

"Let me go, Patsy."

"Hold on, Madie, you will spoil it all."

"But didn't you hear her?"

"Hear who?"

"Addie."

"How do we know it was Addie?"

"It was a woman's voice; it was a cry of terror."

"That's all right, but we ain't sure it was Addie."

"Who else could have screamed?"

"The Italian's grandmother, for all we know. But come; we will go the right way to work."

"Speak, quick! What shall we do?"

"Suppose it is the gal?"

"It is Addie."

"Well, what's the use of taking any chances?"

"We must take chances."

"Oh, yes, but let's only take necessary ones."

"You have a plan?"

"You bet I have."

"What is yor plan?"

"We will get into that room without any one knowing it."

"Well?"

"We will find out if it is the girl."

"All right."

"If it is we'll yank her out, that's all, and if it's necessary we'll fight."

"Patsy, you're a jewel. I'll get into that room."

"I'll follow you."

"No, here I draw the line. I'll go it alone."

"You may need me."

"I may need you out here to give the alarm."

"There is something in that."

The two lads talked matters over and arranged their plans.

Among the other preparations our hero had made he provided himself with a regular night club, a hard locust stick, which in skillful hands is the most effective weapon in a hand-to-hand conflict.

This club he had stowed away in a long pocket made expressly for it. He was otherwise provided for emergencies.

Our hero did not stop to consider the chances he was taking. He was working altogether on a supposition, and he might really be placing himself in the attitude of a housebreaker; indeed, if captured, the chances were that he would so be considered, and Patsy said:

"You mustn't be taken prisoner, Madie."

"You may rest assured I will not."

"It will go hard with you in case you are. Remember, you are armed and equipped like a burglar."

"That's so."

"It's a heavy sentence for house-breaking, and you are going to break into that house, and it may be that the Italian is innocent and that the gal is not in the house at all."

"I know she is there."

"You have no proof, and it is better to be on the safe side."

"I don't mean to be captured."

"You must make sure that you are not."

"You can bet I will be on my guard."

Madie got back on the roof of the house and he proceeded to the scuttle.

He had determined to gain an entrance down the scuttle way, and that act in itself might constitute a state's prison offense, as Patsy had intimated. Our hero, however, was in for it, and did not stop to consider consequences.

CHAPTER VII.

MADIE GETS INTO A HOT SERIES OF SCRAPES.

THE lad had little difficulty in wrenching off the scuttle cover, as the house was old. He found a ladder, by which he descended to the attic floor and then he stopped to consider. He fell back on all his natural shrewdness and coolness. He was not talking, he was acting, and when it came to action he was usually equal to the occasion. He had a masked lantern. He had procured the lantern at the suggestion of Patsy, and he drew his lamp and peeped around. The house appeared to be scantily furnished, and the lad slid the mask of his lantern after having studied his course, and moved along in the dark. He descended to the second floor and listened a moment. It had been his intention to enter the room in which the shadows had been reflected upon the curtains, but a spirit of curiosity caused him to descend to the parlor floor. There were no lights in the hall, but upon reaching the parlor-floor hall he saw a light shooting out from under the door of the rear parlor room. He stole along to this room and peeped in through the keyhole, when he beheld a sight which would have made an excellent tableau for the foundation scene in a play or picture.

Three men were seated around a table. One of them was experimenting with a pen. All three were evidently intensely interested, and occasionally they would utter words in Italian in a low tone; but our hero, who, as our readers know, had studied a little French and Italian, could understand just enough to catch on to what they were up to. The men were practicing on a name. The intent was apparent: they were preparing to commit a forgery, and the artist was a dishonest man. This latter discovery confirmed Madie's suspicions as to the man's

complicity in the disappearance of Addie. He was cool and on the alert, and aided by his keen powers of apprehension was enabled to gather up considerable concerning the real purpose of the forgers. He, however, had not entered the house to detect forgery; he had dared to steal in with the purpose of discovering whether or not Addie was a prisoner in that house.

Words can never describe or indicate the lad's emotions at that moment, as he turned and reascended the stairs, determined to learn who the female was who had uttered the cry of alarm. He stood before the door of the room a moment or two and meditated. He did not wish to have the party in the room give an alarm in case all his suspicions should prove erroneous. There was no time to lose, however, and he tried the door. It yielded and he stole into the room. All was dark. He stood a moment and listened; he was conscious of a presence beside himself in the room, and a moment later he became assured that the other party also was conscious of a presence, for he heard a voice inquire in a husky tone:

"Who's there?"

Madie determined to brave all on one cast. He did not recognize the voice, but discerned that it was a female who had made the inquiry, and he answered:

"A friend."

"A friend of whom?" came the inquiry.

"*You*," was the answer.

"Is this another deception?"

Madie's heart thumped. He was assured at last beyond all question that indeed there was a female in that room, who had been the victim of cruelty and wrong.

"No, it is not another deception; and if I strike a light will you agree not to give an alarm?"

"If you are indeed a friend I certainly will not give an alarm."

"I am here to aid you."

"Let me see your face."

"And you will not cry out?"

"I will not."

Madie slid the mask of his lantern and let the light flash toward the bed, on which the speaker, as he had already discerned, must lie. His suspicion was justified. He beheld a fair-faced girl who had partly risen and was resting her head on her elbow. Her long hair hung disheveled down upon her shoulders, her large blue eyes were sunken far back in her head, and her whole appearance indicated a terrible wasting away. Madie gazed, and his heart stood still; but it was not Addie on whom he looked, and this discovery afforded him great relief, for as he had stood there before his lantern had made the revelation he expected to see the face of Addie, despite the fact that he had not recognized her voice.

"Who are you?" demanded the girl, for the female was but a girl.

"I am your friend."

"I cannot see your face. Come close to me; let me look upon your face. It is a long time since I gazed upon the face of a friend."

"You shall gaze upon my face at your leisure later on. Let me ask you a few questions. Who are you? What are you doing here?"

"Can I be sure that I am speaking to a friend?"

"Yes, you are speaking to a friend; and one who will dare anything to serve you."

"I am an orphan; I am a prisoner here."

"Who imprisoned you?"

"A man who is one of the worst villains in the world. He stole me away from my home and he has kept me a prisoner here."

"And what is his purpose?"

"I do not know. I have been sick and I have wasted away since I have been here. I shall not live much longer, but I would like to die somewhere else and not in this house."

"The man must have had some purpose when he stole you away from your home."

"I do not know what his purpose was."

"How old are you?"

"I am just past fourteen. I worked in a shop where this man worked. He is an Italian. I was living with an old woman, the mother of one of the girls who worked in the shop with me. One night I was returning from work very late—we had been kept to do overwork. I was waylaid on my way home, forced into a carriage and brought here. I have been sick since the first hour I was brought here."

"And you would like to get away from here?"

"Yes, yes."

"Will you give me the name and direction of the woman with whom you lived?"

The girl did as requested, and Madie asked:

"Do you know of any other young ladies who have been brought to this house?"

"No."

"As far as you know, you are the only victim of this man?"

"Yes."

"And you have been sick ever since you have been here?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever made any efforts to escape?"

"No, I could not; I have been too sick."

"You would not be able to escape now if a chance were offered?"

"I am very feeble."

"And what do you know about the men in this house?"

"Nothing."

"Have you ever seen any females in the house?"

"Once only."

"And what sort of a looking person was the party?"

"A strong, stout Italian woman."

"Do you think you will be safe here for a few hours?"

"Yes."

"All right; I will see what I can do. I will promise to get you away from here—how soon I cannot tell, but I will not forget you. I will take immediate steps for your relief."

"Will you not tell me who you are?"

"Not now; no, not now. When you are away and safe I will tell you all about it, and now I will bid you good-night. Keep up your courage, make no mention of my visit here, and in good time all will be well."

Madie had even while talking to the fair prisoner arrived at a determination, and he had also decided upon his course of action. He left the room, reascended to the roof, closed the scuttle after him, and a few moments later stood beside Patsy.

"Well, you're back again."

"I am."

"Is she there?"

"No."

"Has she been there?"

"I think not."

"And what did you learn?"

"I learned a great deal. Patsy, we've got a big job before us; yes, a big one, and we will have to play regular detectives."

"We're getting into business, we are."

"Well, we are."

Madie proceeded and related to Patsy all that had occurred in the house, and when the lad concluded Patsy said:

"By all that's strange and wonderful, but it's a queer thing we've run into. But do you know, Madie, those wrongs are being perpetrated in New York, and in fact in all great cities, about every week in the year, if not every day in the week. It's the old story—poor and pretty—and sometimes I've felt that beauty was a curse unless well protected. To be beautiful and friendless is a misfortune indeed."

"Patsy, we will save the girl."

"We will, and we can do that easy enough."

"How?"

"Just report the matter to headquarters. The police will investigate and take care of the girl."

"We don't report anything to the police."

"What will you do?"

"You and I will get the girl out of that house."

"You are always proposing to take big chances."

"Yes, I am."

"I admire your spunk, but not your prudence. We have Addie to find yet."

"Yes, and we will have to hunt up another scent, I'm thinking."

"We are on the track of the right man."

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"I don't, now."

"We shall see; but, Patsy, we are on to a big crime."

"So you were saying."

"Those men intend to attempt a big scheme of forgery."

"Yes."

"We can bilk their game."

"Yes, all we have to do is go to the chief. He'll take care of 'em."

There came a peculiar look in Madie's eyes as he said:

"The chief will not have anything to do with this case at present."

"What do you mean to do?"

"I have a plan."

"Oh, you have?"

"Yes."

"Then you do not mean to let me have anything to do with it either, I suppose."

"Yes, you shall go in with me."

"What is your plan, Madie?"

"Those fellows are going to work that robbery to-morrow."

"Well?"

"We can lay low, find out on what firm they work their game, and when they receive the money we can follow them up, and then we will notify the firm and they will recover the money."

"Why do you let them commit the robbery?"

"Shall I tell you, Patsy? If we were to prevent the crime those rascals would get away and next time might be successful; but if we let them commit the crime and become liable to punishment while we have a dead open and shut on them they will get their deserts. They will go to jail and three or four scoundrels will be out of the way."

Patsy was thoughtful a moment and then said:

"Do you take in the chances you are braving?"

"I think I do."

"Hardly."

"How?"

"We may be arrested as pals of these fellows."

"After having given the alarm?"

"We are not giving the alarm. It will look as though we merely squealed in order to get the reward."

"Patsy, your wisdom is great, and on general principles you are right; but I want to make sure that those fellows go up, and we will make sure that we release the girl, and

she will be safer after her release if the scoundrel who abducted her goes to state's prison."

"I am not going to stand against your good judgment, Madie. On general principles you are doing wrong. You should put this matter into the hands of the police, but it is possible you may have some scheme of your own, so go it your own way."

On the day following the incidents we have recorded Madie and Patsy were early on the street. They proceeded down to the house to which they had trailed the Italian artist, and then they lay around for a long time. Finally, however, three men came forth from the house, and Madie and Patsy followed after them. Madie, under the tuition of Patsy, had gotten himself up for a great scheme. He had told his quondam friend that he would like to get into a disguise that would permit him to get into the banking house where the Italians intended to work their scheme.

"You can do that well enough. If it's a bank there will be no trouble."

"It is not a bank they intend to rob, but some private banking house."

"You know that?"

"I do."

"Then get up as an apple boy; yes, an apple boy can sneak in and out of places in New York as easy as a fly through an open window. You see the people appear to be accustomed to the little peddlers and don't mind them. It's a great disguise; I've known regulars to work the apple woman racket. It's an old scheme but a good one yet."

Madie got himself up as an apple boy. He and Patsy arranged the basket and had it secreted at a convenient point, and when downtown in pursuit of the forgers Patsy went after the basket while Madie followed the Italians, agreeing to meet his little "pal" at a given point.

Madie followed his men and at length saw all three enter a famous banking house, and even at the same moment Patsy appeared. Madie seized the basket and followed, or rather attempted to enter the bank; but the janitor would not let him in, informing him that they did not admit peddlers. Madie was not to be absolutely baffled, however, and he remained in the great marble hall and watched through the glass doors. He saw the three Italians in conversation with several parties in the banking house, and fully half an hour passed, when he saw the cashier pay over some money to the three men.

Madie had watched well, and seeing the janitor's attention attracted in another direction the lad slipped into the room. He looked like a great big awkward boy peddler, but he had a different expression upon his face when he ran boldly into the private office of one of the firm and approaching him said:

"Play it well; detain those Italians until you can secure an officer. You have been victimized; they have worked a forged check on you."

The banker turned pale and demanded:

"Who are you?"

For want of something better to say Madie answered:

"I am a detective."

The banker looked out to the large counting-room. The men had received their money. Madie took in the situation and said:

"All right; ring for help. I will hold them."

The lad ran out. He was a powerful lad, as our readers know. He seized hold of one of the Italians and in doing so pushed them all away from the exit door. The men were ready to be panic-stricken, and were naturally very excited and nervous.

"I've got you," cried Madie. "You owe me for a dozen apples. I've got you now."

The Italians appeared to be relieved when they discovered the cause of their detention, and one of them said:

"You are mistaken, boy."

"No, I am not mistaken."

"Pay him," said one of the Italians. "Yes, pay him, even if it is a mistake."

The man spoke in Italian. Our hero feared he might lose the excuse and dealt the man a blow. Immediately there followed a regular scrimmage, and the boy and the three men were clinched when suddenly three officers ran into the office.

"Here, here, what is going on here?" came the query, as the two officers seized all four of the combatants. The Italians were wild and furious, not knowing that they had really been tricked. They protested and fumed and appealed to the clerks, and the latter also, not knowing what had occurred, protested and declared that the Italians were gentlemen and had been assailed by the ruffianly apple boy. But while the argument and protestations were going on a detective entered the room. Then the banker came from his office and said:

"Those men were fighting in our office. I prefer a charge of disorderly conduct against them."

"Bring them all along," said the detective.

Madie saw that he was going to be locked up and he made a vigorous protest. He was in dead earnest too, as a recollection of Patsy's warning ran through his mind: "If we betray them we may be arrested as pals."

The officers paid no attention to any of the protests and the three Italians and our hero were hustled off, not to the station-house but to police headquarters, and on the way the Italians uttered dire and bitter threats against Madie. Indeed they had entirely lost their heads, and they had good reason to do so: time was important to them under the circumstances.

Madie was locked up in a room. He had had no show; not a word that he said was of any use. Patsy saw his friend carried away and he was cute enough to follow at a distance, not that he was deserting his friend, but because he believed he could serve him better from the outside.

Our hero had been in a cell for about an hour when the detective who arrested him entered and our hero said:

"For two pins I'd knock you over."

"You would?" answered the detective, with a smile.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because you don't know your business."

"So you think I don't know my business?"

"Yes, I do."

"What makes you think so?"

"Why am I locked up here for doing a big firm a service?"

"Oh, I see; and that is what I want to get at. How did you happen to quarrel with those men?"

"Oh, I see what you are getting at."

"Do you?"

"Yes."

"Then you are a mind reader."

"You think I am a squealer."

"What are you?"

"Those men are Italians."

"Yes."

"What am I?"

"You may be an Italian also, for all I know."

"Do I look like an Italian?"

"I don't know what you look like."

"Then you must be blind."

"Hardly; but you are under cover, young man, you are disguised. We'll yank off your disguise after a bit and see what you really look like. In the meantime, tell me all about it."

"All about what?"

"How you came to squeal on your pals."

"Do you want a straight story?"

"Yes, I do."

"Can you take in a straight story when you hear one?"

"Yes, I can."

"I am down here in New York to find a missing girl."

"Oh! that's it?"

"Yes."

Madie proceeded and told a part of his story, just enough to let it appear that he suspected that one of the Italians knew something about the missing girl. He then added the narrative of the previous night's experience, told his story in a clear, straightforward manner, and when he had concluded the detective said:

"That girl must be there yet."

"Very likely she is, and I want you to let me out of here so I can go to her rescue."

"I'll see you later, young man," said the detective, and he disappeared from the cell.

Three hours passed and the detective re-entered our hero's cell, and he was very pleasant and genial in his manner as he flung the door wide open and said:

"Come out, young fellow; you are all right."

Madie stepped forth and the detective said:

"You can go, but come here to-morrow and see me."

"I've seen enough of you."

"You had better come, I may have something good for you. The girl, she is all right."

"What girl?"

"The girl that was in that house. She is with her friends. You need not bother about her, but come and see me to-morrow."

CHAPTER VIII.

MADIE STARTS ON A FRESH TRAIL.

As Madie gained the street Patsy accosted him:

"Hello, Madie; it's all right."

"What's all right?"

"You're all right."

"What more?"

"The girl is all right."

Patsy told him how he had followed the detective and an officer, how they had entered the house, had found the girl, and how later she had been carried away in an ambulance.

"Where to, Patsy?"

"A hospital, I reckon. And now tell me what happened to you?"

Madie told his story, and Patsy said at its conclusion:

"All's well that ends well. You were lucky to be able to prove your innocence, and I think you've made a hit."

"How?"

"Call on the detective to-morrow and learn what he has to say. He's a good fellow, a square man. You've made a friend, that's sure."

"I'd like to know which hospital they took the girl to and——"

Madie stopped short, when Patsy said:

"You'd go and see her?"

"Yes."

"In my opinion you will have all you can do to find Miss Addie."

On the day following the incidents we have recorded Madie, according to agreement, called to see the detective, and the latter said:

"So you decided to come and see me?"

"Yes."

"I am sorry," came the remark, with a smile.

"It is easy for me to go away again."

"Since you are here I may as well pay you your reward. If you hadn't visited me I could have pocketed all of it."

"You have a reward for me?"

"I have. Those fellows whom you trapped so cleverly obtained five thousand dollars from the bankers on the most clever bit of forgery ever worked in New York. Had they gotten away the money would all have been lost, and the firm has given me two hundred and fifty dollars for you; here is your money."

Madie's eyes danced. It was a great sum and came to him at a time when he needed money.

"The gentlemen composing the firm wish to see you any time you are downtown. And now one word more: any time you need a friend send for me. I believe you are a good honest youth and I would be glad to serve you."

When our hero met Patsy at their room he told of the money he had received, and counting out one hundred and twenty-five dollars handed it to his comrade.

"What is that?" demanded Patsy.

"It's your half."

"No, no; there's nothing coming to me."

"Yes, that is your half."

"Do you mean it?"

"I do."

"You're not joking?"

"It's your money."

Patsy gazed a moment in a bewildered manner. He had never owned more than as many pennies in his whole life, and after a little he exclaimed:

"The sight of it as my own has made me stone blind."

"It's your money, Patsy."

"Begorra, I'll go to college on that money. I will, sure."

Patsy was very happy, and some day we will tell our readers what he did with a part of the money, which was to him a great fortune.

That same night the two lads had a long talk, and our hero, after a long spell of thinking, asked:

"Patsy, what is your idea?"

"I have a hundred."

"Let's hear one of them."

"Maybe the girl ran away."

"No."

"Maybe she was drowned."

"I don't believe it."

"Well, I've given you my ideas. Now, what do you believe?"

"I still believe that Italian knows something about her."

"I don't agree with you."

"To-morrow we will try a new plan."

"What is your new plan?"

"We know the route the girl would take to go to the artist's studio."

"Where he will go no more for the present," interjected Patsy.

"The chances are his case is settled for the present."

"It's strange, Madie."

"What is strange?"

"That a man with his talent should become a forger."

"Ah, Patsy, the lust for gold is something terrible. He has been tempted by others."

"Do you believe there is any good in him?"

"I cannot tell. If he is innocent as concerns Addie there may be some good in him."

"Then if I were you I'd get your friend, the detective, to take you to see him in his cell. Now that he is doomed he may reveal something to you."

"I will visit him later on. In the meantime we will carry out my plan; it is a good one."

"What is your plan?"

"We will go over every inch of the ground along which Addie must have passed. We must meet some one who saw her on that morning. We may get a clew and we can follow it up."

"Madie, you are getting to be a regular detective."

"I've read that that is the way detectives go to work—follow over a given route step by step until they strike a clew."

"To-morrow we will do the same thing, Madie; but remember, several weeks, or months rather, have passed since the girl disappeared."

"I know that, and although it seems like a forlorn hope we will try it. Remember, we're rich; we can take our time."

"Let's go to the theater to-night. I'll treat," said Patsy.

Madie had never been to a theater in New York, and, little dreaming of the remarkable incident that was to follow his visit, he agreed to go.

To Patsy it was not a new experience. He had often been in the upper tier—it was a new thing for him to sit in the parquette, and he looked forward with gleeful anticipation to the privilege.

The lads were both fairly well dressed and presented quite a neat appearance as they walked in and took their seats. The play was a comedy, and in the company was a bright, pert miss of about fifteen, who played the role of a boy, and in this particular character Madie became deeply interested. Patsy noticed his seeming admiration and whispered:

"Farewell, Addie."

Madie flashed a fierce glance at his companion and demanded:

"What do you mean by your remark?"

"Oh, you're gone on the boy, or the girl in boy's clothes."

Madie offered no explanation, but he turned deathly pale when one of two gentlemen sitting in the seat behind him remarked:

"How much that girl in boy's clothes looks like Addie."

Our hero turned deathly pale. He turned round and faced the man. The latter did not appear to notice the attention, however, and said no more.

Madie meantime became very nervous and restless, and ever and anon he would turn around and look at the two men who sat in the rear. Patsy, observing his excitement, finally asked:

"What's the matter with you, Madie?"

"Did you hear what that man in our rear said?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"Oh, is it that remark that has upset you?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"The name Addie."

"My dear boy, there are a dozen Addies in this theater, possibly, and more than likely a hundred men who know girls by the name of Addie."

The conversation between the two youths was carried on in whispers, but Patsy gave a start and uttered an exclamation of amazement when Madie said:

"The remark is true."

"True?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"That girl on the stage, dressed in boy's clothes, does look like Addie."

"Your lost Addie?"

"Yes."

"Is the resemblance very striking?"

"It is."

"And the man said: 'That girl looks like Addie?'"

"That is what he said."

"Then, Madie, you have a clew."

Our hero had great difficulty in sitting the play through. He desired to speak to the man in his rear, but did not wish to do so in the theater. When the play ended he hurried out, followed by Patsy, who asked:

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to ask that man a few questions."

"You are?"

"Yes."

"Don't you do it."

"Why not?"

"If he is the villain who stole your Addie he will give you no satisfaction."

"What shall I do?"

"Watch him, 'pipe' him? that's what we'll do."

"Patsy, you're a dandy."

Madie was fast getting on to city slang phrases.

"If you were to ask him a question and he's really guilty, do you suppose he'd give you any satisfaction? And again, he'd be on to you and cover his tracks. No, no; you do not want to speak to him."

"We will 'dog' him."

"That's what we'll do."

The boys waited for the two men to issue from the theater, but they did not appear, or if they did the lads had lost sight of them."

"Great ginger, Patsy, we've lost them."

"So it appears."

The lads waited until every one had departed from the playhouse and until the front lights had been extinguished, but they did not see the two men.

Again Madie moaned:

"We've lost them."

"Not yet, Madie, not yet."

"If we have not lost them where are they?"

"I can't tell you now."

"Then we've lost them."

"For the time being only, Madie. We've got them down too fine to lose them. We'll find them again. We will go for 'em like two hounds, and we'll scent 'em out, you bet."

"You keep my courage up. I can fight a bear, but I can't stand anxiety, Patsy."

"We will come out all right."

The lads went home and on the way talked matters over. Patsy always wound up with the statement:

"We've got a clew sure."

On the following morning the two lads were out bright and early; indeed they selected an hour when they hoped to be able to meet just the parties who might be most likely to give them some information; and it was remarkable, the manner in which they pursued the inquiries.

They had gone over the whole ground and had not gathered one item that was of service, and Patsy remarked:

"We will give this up."

"Not yet, Patsy. We'll track over the same ground again; we'll keep tracking all day long."

"All right, Madie, dear. I am with you."

The lads had gone very slowly over the ground. They had questioned every one whom they thought would be likely to have seen the girl, and on their return trip they did the same thing, and going over the whole ground the second time obtained no results.

"Here we go again," said Patsy, striding off at a good gait.

"Yes, here we go again."

The lads had passed over about half the ground when Madie saw a little girl come forth from a house. He approached her and asked:

"Do you live in that house?"

The girl looked at him in a curious manner and finally answered:

"Yes."

"Do you sometimes look out of the window?"

"What a funny question!"

"Yes, I know it is a funny question, but I want you to answer me all the same."

"Yes, I look out of the window all the time. My mamma is sick. I stay in the room with her and have nothing else to do."

"Do you ever see that pretty girl that used to go by here?"

"Do you mean a long time ago?"

"Yes, several months ago."

The little girl reflected a moment and then said:

"I used to admire her so much."

"Then you remember her?"

"Yes, I do."

"When did you see her last?"

"I have not seen her since the morning she stood right across the street there, talking with a man."

Madie's heart bumped.

"So you haven't seen her since you saw her over there?"

"No."

"She was talking to a man?"

"Yes."

"What time in the day was it?"

"About ten o'clock in the morning."

"Did she go away with the man?"

"They walked up the street together. I do not know whether or not she went away with him."

"He wasn't a nice-looking man to be talking to a young lady, was he?"

"Oh, he was not a bad-looking man."

"Do you remember what he looked like?"

"Yes, I do."

"Would you know him if you saw him again?"

"Yes, I would."

"You are sure?"

"Yes, I am."

"You can't tell me what he looked like?"

"Yes, I can."

"Will you?"

"Yes. Why not?"

"Do so."

The girl possessed the female faculty for descriptions, and she described the man she had seen accurately. Our hero's heart thrilled as he realized that the girl's description answered to that of the man who had spoken of a resemblance to Addie in the theater.

"You have not seen the man around here since that morning?"

"No."

"Nor the girl?"

"No."

Patsy had been a surprised and delighted listener to the dialogue, and when he and Madie walked away the little gamin exclaimed:

"Well, persistence and perseverance will accomplish a great deal."

"You bet they will."

"We have a clew now."

"We have. There is no doubt now we have the right man."

"It's strange, Madie."

"What is strange?"

"The whole affair."

"Yes, it is, and we will solve the mystery."

"How will we go about it?"

"We must run down that man."

"Easy said, but hard to accomplish."

"We will walk the streets day and night; we will visit every theater in the city; we will be ever on the lookout."

"And I believe we will find him. Yes, as I said, we have a great clew now."

The two lads separated, agreeing to meet at a certain point. Patsy was to go one way, Madie the other. Both boys were confident they would readily recognize the man if they met him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BOYS FIND THEIR MAN AND GREAT RESULTS FOLLOW.

PATSY was a very cute little fellow and as persistent as any lad in the land, and he started on his way with those ferret eyes of his on the lookout for a great find. He peered into the face of every man he met, and it was late in the afternoon when the two boys joined each other.

"Well, Patsy, did you see him?"

"I did not."

"Nor I; but we'll find him."

"We will."

The lads went together and had a meal, and then proceeded to their room, where Madie made himself up as a countryman. He assumed the role to perfection.

It was about nine o'clock when the lads issued forth again. Patsy, as before, went in one direction and our hero in another, and the latter walked until near midnight, when, as he was passing a certain place, he saw a man alight from a carriage and pass under an electric light and enter a hallway.

"Great Cæsar!" ejaculated Madie, "there's my man."

The youth ran forward, but the man had disappeared, and Madie was walking up and down before the hallway when suddenly Patsy appeared.

"Well, Madie, you're on to something."

"Am I?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"You are all excitement."

"Do I betray myself so plainly?"

"Yes, you do."

"Well, I've found our man."

"You have?"

"Yes."

"Great luck; where is he?"

"He went in there."

Madie pointed to the hallway.

"Great catfish! Madie, that is a tiger's den."

"A what?"

"A gambling house. Are you sure your man went in there?"

"Yes, I am."

"That looks bad."

"It does?"

"Yes."

"For whom?"

"Addie. If it was a gambler who inveigled her away I am sorry for her and for you."

"But the man is there."

"So you said."

"What shall we do?"

"Wait here, I suppose."

"Wait? what for?"

"For him to come out."

"I can go in."

"No use."

"Why not?"

"The girl is not there."

"I can question him."

"Oh, can you?"

"Yes."

"Don't."

"I will."

"Then your game is over, that's all. We must lay low for that man, trail him to where he lives, to where he goes, to where he has the girl concealed."

"Your advice is good."

"You will find it good."

The boys lay around for two hours, and it was well on to two o'clock in the morning when the two men came forth and entered their carriage, which had waited for them.

When the carriage was driven off the two boys started in to follow it. They had but little trouble, as the vehicle was driven quite slowly. The lads followed for several squares and then the carriage came to a halt in front of a fine house. The two boys were at hand to see the men enter the house, and as the carriage drove away they ran up in front of the house. Madie was considerably excited and said:

"We will find her now, and, Patsy, you can make up your mind there will be a great fight to-night."

"All right, if there comes a fight I am in it for all I am worth; but I am only a boy, and you are not a man. Don't bring on a fight unless you are compelled to, old man."

"I am going through that house."

"I am with you."

"No, I will go it alone."

"You are taking big chances, Madie."

"I know, and that is the reason I am going it alone. I

want you to stay outside, so if anything happens you can give the alarm."

"I am afraid you will land in jail yet."

"Not I."

"You can't be playing burglar without getting caught."

"But these men are criminals."

"You are not sure of that."

"Remember what we accomplished when we followed the Italians."

"Yes, but you won't strike forgers in every house, remember that."

"It's Addie I am after."

"All right; I'll do all I can to aid you."

"All I want you to do is to stay out here and watch."

"Suppose you don't show up—what am I to do?"

"Notify the police. Let them come for me."

"That won't do, Madie."

"Why not?"

"If those men catch you in that house they will accuse you of attempted burglary. I'll give it to you straight, if you're caught it's no use appealing to the police. I want you to understand the risk."

"I do."

"All right; if you don't show up leave it to me to decide what I'll do."

"I'll leave it to you."

Madie, meantime, made a survey of the house and finally determined to find an entrance through the basement door. He had arranged for just such an expedition, and giving Patsy his shoes, he put on a pair of moccasins, fixed his mask lantern, and stole into the areaway and set to work on the basement door.

We will here state that Madie had received a great many instructions from Patsy, and he had learned how to force a door with the skill of a burglar, and it did not take him

long to get into the house. Once inside he looked around and found the look of things entirely different to what he had discovered when he entered the house of the Italians. He saw evidences of cleanliness and good order on every hand. He ascended to the parlor floor. No lights were burning and he moved very cautiously. He finally entered the parlor and after a moment slid the mask of his lantern and glanced around. He was surprised; he saw no evidences of a criminal gang. On the contrary, everything appeared as well arranged and orderly as one would expect to find things in any respectable household.

"Hang it," muttered the lad, "I don't understand it."

Madie determined to ascend to the second floor. He did so, and heard voices in the front room, and also perceived a light showing under the door. He listened and became aware that he heard a woman's voice. He peeped in the room and there, sure enough, was a lady, fully attired. She was standing in the center of the floor, while a gentleman—the man our hero had been trailing—was stretched upon a sofa, and the lady was berating the man for having come home so late.

Madie stopped and considered. "Great ginger!" he muttered; "I have not made any mistake. That is the man, and he is being scolded by his wife for being out late. It don't look as though he would have any evil designs against Addie. I do not know what to make of it. Can it be possible that I am following a false clew? If I am it will not do for me to be caught in here, or it will be all day for me, that's certain."

Madie determined to ascend to the third floor. He did so and was moving along on tiptoe when suddenly a door opened and a half-dressed man stood before him. The man did not speak one word, but made a grab for the intruder. It was no time for argument. The man did not speak, neither did Madie, but he let fly and with a well-

directed blow knocked the man back into the room. The man uttered a cry. He yelled: "Thieves! murder! robbery!" and Madie heard the door of the room below open. He made a dash down the stairs. A man stood there to receive him.

"You villain!" cried the man, and he made a grab. Meantime the lady was screaming with all her voice: "Murder! murder! murder!"

Had Madie been wise he would have stopped right there, permitted himself to be captured, and would have explained all; but on the contrary he felt it would not do to be taken, and jumped right on to the man at the foot of the stairs.

A struggle followed, and the lady came to the assistance of her husband and in her excitement she used a cushion from off the sofa, with which she beat our hero over the head. At the same time a second female voice was heard screaming: "Murder! murder! murder!" the man also, whom our hero had first met, came rushing down the stairs. He carried a cocked pistol in his hand and would have fired had not the gentleman with whom Madie was struggling called out: "Hold on; don't shoot!" It was not consideration for the intruder that led him to protest. He feared he might get the bullet himself. Madie finally got loose and made a dash down the stairs, and he heard the bang of a pistol and indeed heard the bullet sing past his head. He reached the door and managed to open it, thinking he was all right, when lo, he ran straight into the arms of an officer. The lad was not prepared to surrender. On the contrary, he struggled with the officer and it is doubtful how the struggle would have ended had not Patsy skipped up on the stoop, and, catching the officer by the legs, threw him off his feet. As the policeman fell he dragged Madie with him, but our hero was agile and strong and managed to wrench himself free, and away he and Patsy sped. They were just in time, for three other police appeared, running toward them.

"Leave it to me," cried Patsy.

The little gamin ran straight up to the police and called to them:

"Hurry up, hurry! they are killing a man in that house down the street."

The police were fooled and rushed on. The two boys did not look like burglars and the ruse was easily played, and played just in time.

"Now, for it, Madie. We've got to leg it or die."

The two boys did leg it, and fortunately Patsy was up to a scheme. His familiarity with New York life stood him well in hand and the lads got well away.

Meantime the three officers arrived at the house just in time to meet their comrade rushing down the stoop.

"Did you catch 'em?" he demanded.

"Catch who?"

"The burglars."

"Where are they?"

"They just ran up the street. One was disguised as a countryman and the other was a boy."

"We've been 'dumped,'" was the exclamation of one of the three officers, and two of them at once started in pursuit of Madie and Patsy.

The two lads reached their room in safety, and when once within their own apartment Patsy said:

"Well, we are in for it now."

"Oh, you take too gloomy a view of it, Patsy. It's all a good joke."

"You think so, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, I tell you inside of two hours there will be two or three detectives on the hunt for us, and they'll find us. We had better shift."

"What, change our quarters?"

"Let the room and furniture stand, but you and I had better make ourselves scarce."

"Not I; let a detective come."

"If he does you and I will go to jail, that's all."

"We'll give him a good fight for it first."

"Not I, Madie; no use to fight detectives—two boys of our build. They'll down us so quick we will never know what hit us. But did you see anything of the girl?"

"No."

"Well, I don't think she is there, from what you told me. The whole thing is a false lead and we are in a pretty pickle. The chances are we'll go up the river."

"Not we."

"You don't understand, Madie."

"I'll tell my story."

"Will you?"

"Yes."

"And do you think they will believe it? No, no; and you made a fight with the two men. You committed an assault on both of them after having forced your way into the house like a burglar. They will laugh at your tale."

"I can prove it."

"Can you?"

"I can."

"It won't do any good. They will claim you are a burglar, all the same, and now my advice is that we quit these quarters for the present—fly the ranch until the thing blows over, if it ever does. They have got us both down for a description."

) "We were both under a disguise."

"That's all right, but those detectives will go through our disguise easy enough."

Even while the lads were talking a footstep was heard on the stairs outside the room. The lads had been in their room less than an hour. Voices were heard, and Patsy, his face pale, said:

"Madie, we're too late; they are here."

"Who is here?"

"The cops; they are laying for us outside."

Madie meditated an instant and then said:

"The door is locked?"

"Yes."

"Follow me."

The window chanced to be open. Madie stole through it and stood on the sill an instant, and then caught on to a rope and the next instant he was ascending to the roof.

"Quick, Patsy," he called.

Patsy did not need a second invitation. He went up the rope like a monkey, and when both were on the roof Madie hauled the rope up after him.

"They haven't got us yet, Patsy."

"Where did you get the rope?"

"Oh, I fixed it there a day or two ago against just such an emergency."

"It's just high."

"Yes, we're pretty high up, pal."

"We can't stay here."

"Nor will we; follow me."

Madie led the way across the roof, and attaching his rope to a bolt which he had fixed for the purpose he told Patsy to let himself down to the roof below, and at the same instant remarked:

"In times of peace prepare for war."

Once on the roof of the adjoining house, which was at least twenty feet lower than the one from which they had just descended, the lads proceeded along across several roofs, moving swiftly and noiselessly. Madie carried a second rope with him and they let themselves down to a house still lower, and from there got down to an extension, and finally landed in an alleyway.

"So far so good," said Madie.

"Yes, Madie, but we're rubbing it in."

"How?"

"By this escape we are killing the story you will have to tell when we are caught."

"We do not mean to be caught."

"Those men are in our room by this time."

"Well?"

"They will find all our disguises and will have the evidence dead against us that we are regular burglars."

"They can have the evidence as long as they do not get us."

"What will we do now?"

"Lay low, of course, and to-morrow we will go around to that house again and dog that man. Addie is there, or he knows where she is, and I will rescue her or die, or go to state's prison, that's all."

"If it was any one else, Madie, I'd ask you to count me out, but I'll stick to you even if it's death or the jail."

CHAPTER X.

THE BOYS BECOME FUGITIVES.

THE two lads found a hiding place for the night, and despite their exciting experiences slept soundly until morning.

In the meantime the detectives did force an entrance into their room. Patsy had been right when he said the officers would trail them down, and it was the detectives whom the lads had heard in the hall, and they would have heard something that would have amused them had they been present when the detectives got into the room. The latter had been laying low to catch the boys napping, but finally decided to enter, and when they did, as our readers have conjectured, they found that the birds had flown.

"Well, I'll be shot," cried one of the officers, "they have beat us."

"Yes, so it appears. They are regular Jack Sheppards."

"They have Jacked us, that is certain."

"How in thunder did they get away?"

"Oh, it's easy to see they can climb like monkeys, and they went through the window to the roof."

One of the detectives leaned out of the window and took a look, and he exclaimed:

"If they went out of this window they flew out, that's all. They'd never climb to the roof from here."

Detective number two looked out and after a moment said:

"They were in the room."

"Yes, that's dead sure."

"They are not here now."

"So it appears."

"They must have gotten away."

"That's certain."

"Then they went by the window; they didn't go through the roof."

"Well, it gets me."

"They are daring fellows, that's all—old hands at the business."

"What can we do? One thing is certain: we can't follow them through the window, but we can go up the scuttle way."

"We can, yes," said the officer, with a laugh; "but it won't do us any good."

"Why not?"

"They are well away by this time. They have the scuttle down as well as we have; they've discounted that."

"And have we lost them?"

"No, we will lay low and we'll get them in the end. We've got 'em so well identified. Yes, we can take it easy."

On the day following the incidents we have described

the two lads, who had been shrewd enough to shake their disguises immediately upon their return to their rooms on the previous night, started out. They felt pretty safe, or at least Madie did. Patsy did express some misgivings. They proceeded to the house which our hero had entered, and they lay around for some time, until they saw their man issue forth. They followed him down town and saw him enter a large mercantile house.

"I'd like to hear that man talk," said Madie, and just as he uttered the words the warning came, "Look out."

It was Patsy who had given the warning, and he started off on a run just as a man grabbed Madie by the arm. Ere the lad could make a protest the handcuffs were on him, and he was aware that he was a prisoner.

Patsy did not mean to desert our hero. It had been agreed between the two lads that in an emergency if one could get away he must do so in order to help the other from the outside.

"Well, Mister Man," said the officer, "I've got you safe enough."

"I am under arrest?"

"It looks that way, don't it?"

"What is the charge?"

"Attempted burglary."

"I attempted no burglary."

"Oh, no; but don't talk. Keep your lips buttoned; it's no time to talk."

"You are very smart," said Madie.

The officer paid no attention to the lad's remark, and half an hour later poor Madie was an inmate of a cell in the Tombs, and a more disconsolate lad never looked from behind the bars. He had been in jail about two hours when suddenly there came a call. He looked up, and there stood Patsy gazing at him.

"Great ginger! Patsy, did they catch you?"

"No, it's all right. Take it cool, Madie, dear. I haven't been idle; there will be a friend of yours here pretty soon."

"Who?"

"Never mind, you'll know him when you see him, and it will be all right. You can take it easy, old fellow."

"I don't understand it, Patsy, but I reckon I'm a goner."

"No, you're all right. You would have been, but you put an anchor to windward."

The two lads talked for about half an hour. Patsy would not give any explanation. The explanation came, however, in a most remarkable manner. A turnkey appeared, opened the cell door and led our hero downstairs. The lad was ushered into a court room and there he beheld the gentleman for whom he had saved the money by betraying the forgers. Beside him stood the detective who had arrested the Italians, and there was another gentleman present who assisted at the signing of some papers. The latter, our hero afterward learned, was an assistant district attorney. After the papers were signed the judge reached over and said to the banker:

"The lad is free."

The gentleman stepped over beside Madie and said:

"I trust you will come out all right. I am glad to serve you; good-day."

The gentleman went away, but the detective approached and said:

"Young man, I am sorry you fell into trouble, but it will be all right."

"It was you, sir, who secured my release?"

"Yes; your friend there hunted me up and told me all about the matter, and I took measures for your release on bail."

"So I am only bailed?"

"That is all "

"I will have to stand trial?"

"It looks that way."

"Appearances are against me, I can say that to you."

"It may come out all right, but be careful in future about prowling around in strangers' houses after midnight. I have had a talk with the district attorney, and I will see him again. It is possible we can make it all right for you."

"You do not believe I am a burglar?"

"No, but I fear you will get into serious trouble hunting for that girl."

"I must find her."

"I reckon you will be happier if you never succeed."

The detective's voice sounded a singular significance as he spoke, and there came an uninterpretable smile to his face. Thinking that he discerned the officer's meaning Madie said:

"Mark my words, I know what you mean. I will avenge her."

Again the detective's features were overspread by a smile as he said:

"Take my advice and keep quiet until after your examination on this charge, and then go back to the country. But remember, I am your friend as long as you do nothing absolutely unlawful, and if I can ever aid you call on me."

The two lads walked away and were strolling up the street when a man approached and said

"Hello, Martin."

The man had run against Madie, and it was our hero whom he had addressed.

"My name is not Martin," said Madie, "my name is——"

"Never mind what your name is," interjected Patsy.

"You have no time to waste with this fellow."

As Patsy spoke he pushed Madie away.

"What is the matter, Patsy?"

"Oh, that fellow is a sneak thief. He was just playing you to get your name."

The lads returned to their room and determined to "slick up," as they said, and go to the theater. Patsy had persuaded his friend to adjourn all investigations over for one day, and in urging the plan he had given satisfactory reasons, saying:

"They are all on the alert now. Let matters quiet down a bit and then you will have them better off their guard."

"I am going to get into that house, Patsy."

"That's all right; but I'll give you my idea."

"Let's have it."

"You will not find her. The man who lives there knows no more about the Addie you are looking for than the man in the moon."

The two lads went to the theater and were much amused, and when the play was over they issued forth, determined to take a night stroll. They had not gone far, however, when a country-looking sort of a chap came toward them and addressed them in a jovial manner. He appeared to be slightly under the influence of liquor, and in a very jolly mood—not at all ugly.

"Come, fellows," he said, "let's go and have a cup of coffee."

Madie would have refused, but Patsy said:

"All right, we'll go," and when he got a chance he whispered to our hero:

"Lay low, there's something in this. The man is under cover. We'll have some fun."

"I'd like a little fun," Madie found an opportunity to declare, adding: "It's been anything but fun since I've been in New York."

"We're on to something, you bet, and let's take it in."

The countryman appeared to know the city pretty well, for he led the lads to an all-night house where one could get a private supper-room, and into one of these rooms the man led the two lads.

As intimated, he appeared to be in a very jolly mood. He ordered something better than coffee and cakes—quite a substantial meal—and he kept his tongue going right along just like a man with just enough wine in him to make him talkative.

The lads were hungry and ate heartily, and the stranger gradually worked along until in the most natural manner he began to ask questions, and he said:

"Did you fellows ever meet a mind-reader?"

Patsy answered, "No."

"I am a mind-reader."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

Patsy, when he felt just right, was a great fellow for guying any one, and he said:

"Suppose you give us a specimen of your powers."

"I will, but first I must ask you a few questions."

"All right, sail in."

"What is your name?"

"My name is Dollie Cox, and his name is Dolly Varden," said Patsy.

"Now you're fooling."

"Is that a specimen of your mind-reading—you can read that we are fooling? I can beat that."

"You can?"

"Yes, I can."

"All right, start in."

"You won't get mad?"

"No."

"You will talk it clear through without kicking up a row?"

"Yes."

"All right, I'll tell you what I've read."

"Do so."

"You're a fraud."

The man did not get mad but laughed in a jolly manner and said:

"That's good so far, but how do you know I am a fraud? There's where the mind-reading comes in."

"I can tell you."

"Go it."

"You're working a game."

"Well, you are a good reader. But how do you know I am working a game?"

"You are in disguise."

"Well, now, you are immense. Why am I in disguise? What is my game?" demanded the pretended countryman, without any display of ill temper.

"We're not giving you points."

"Oh, you're not? Well, suppose I tell you that you are working a game?"

"Go it."

"You are."

"All right, we are. What of it?"

"You two fellows are following a gentleman up; you are dogging his steps everywhere he goes."

"Is that so?"

Madie spoke the words with the peculiar emphasis which is familiar to our readers.

The whole manner of the countryman suddenly changed. He drew a pistol, and aiming at Madie demanded:

"What's your game? I give you just two seconds to tell what you are up to, young fellow."

The instant the man drew the pistol and aimed Patsy threw a cup of hot coffee in his face. The man's arm fell and Madie let drive with the sugar bowl, which had been filled with soft brown sugar. Then Patsy hit the stranger over the head with the dish which had held a big beef-steak, and the gravy ran down his cheeks. The attack had come so suddenly and the different assaults in such

quick succession the man became bewildered, and Patsy, grabbing the tablecloth, threw it over the man's head. Madie seized a napkin and quick as a wink tied the cloth over the countryman's head, and then the latter began to yell. As a closing act in the comedy Patsy dumped a pitcher of iced water over the poor fellow, and then both lads made a bolt from the room. A waiter met them and attempted to seize them. Madie dealt the fellow a kick right above the stomach, and he fell kicking on the floor. A second waiter made a rush, and Patsy crammed a butter-plate which had been filled with butter on his head, and Madie dealt him a kick that sent him sprawling on his face. By that time the proprietor of the place rushed forward to take a hand in it. He received a pitcher of iced water over his head, and then the lads made a rush, leaving a babel of shouts behind them. They gained the street and made off at a dead run.

The boys reached their home. They found everything in order and they were quite jovial over the manner in which they had served out the countryman, but when once at home they sat down to talk over the real purpose of the man.

"Patsy," said Madie, "those people have got on to the fact that we've been dogging them."

"That's true."

"We've had a heap of fun, all considered."

"Yes, but our fun may be cut short at any moment. That man is after us."

Even as Patsy spoke the door of their room opened and a man entered, followed by a second party whom both the lads recognized at once as the man they had seen at the theater—the man who was supposed to be the abductor of Addie. Both lads leaped to their feet, and both grabbed something as a weapon of defense, but the first man to enter cried out:

"Hold on, lads, there is no need to show fight. We do

not mean you any harm. We are here only to obtain some information, if we can."

Madie said:

"All right; stand where you are and talk out your business."

The gentleman who had accompanied the first speaker here said:

"Young man, take things cool and easy. There has been some mistake. I think if we sit down and talk it over we can reach a satisfactory explanation. I have had a talk with a gentleman who knows you, and he has said enough to me to lead me to seek an explanation."

The gentleman spoke in such a fair, open manner Madie determined to listen quietly to what he had to say.

"Sit down, sir."

The lad offered chairs and all hands sat down. Madie had concluded that his friend, the detective, must have seen the gentleman, who proceeded and said:

"You appear to be looking for a missing young lady."

"I am, sir."

"And what is her name?"

"Addie Velkanau."

Our hero had resolved to be perfectly frank.

"And you think I know something about the missing girl?"

"Yes, sir."

"You did not enter my house to rob me?"

"No, sir."

"What was your purpose?"

"I have been on your trail. I followed you to your house and determined to steal in and learn if the girl Addie was an inmate."

"What first led you to suspect that the girl was in my house?"

Madie related what had occurred at the theater. He

also told of the description he had received from the little girl who had seen Addie Velkanau talking to a man opposite to her home. The gentleman listened attentively, and when our hero had concluded he said:

"My young friend, this appears to have been a series of very singular and remarkable coincidences, and I believe your story, for I have heard about you and I have been seeking to find you. Now let me tell you I was on my way here when I met the man whom I had employed to find out the facts for me—the man whom you lads served out so well, and I came right here, as I had just learned your address. I did speak of a resemblance in the theater, and I did talk to a girl on the street at the place where you say I met her, and this is my explanation: I have a daughter named Addie. You can see the little girl at my house any time, and you need not steal in like a burglar. The girl I met on the street was Addie Velkanau, for she told me her name, and I spoke to her because of her resemblance to my child. If you know Miss Velkanau and see my child you will also note the very remarkable resemblance. That is all I know about the girl whom you seek."

Madie gazed in amazement. The gentleman spoke like one who was telling the truth.

"It is all very remarkable, sir," he said.

"Yes, it is singular, that is all. You can find dozens of girls who are not relatives, who resemble each other, and this appears to be one of those cases; but you can see my child any time."

"I would be pleased to do so, sir."

"All right, call at my house in the morning and you shall see *my* Addie."

After some further talk the gentleman went away, and our hero, turning to Patsy, asked:

"Where are we at? Hang it, Patsy, we are just where we commenced. We have no clew at all now."

CHAPTER XI.

ON the following morning our hero called at the gentleman's house. The visit was quite an amusing one, for the girl to whom Madie was introduced did appear to be about Addie Velkanew's age, and did bear a very striking resemblance to the missing girl, but she was not our hero's Addie, and as he had said to Patsy, he was without a clew.

A few days passed; the two boys spent a great deal of time hunting for other clews and failed in every direction, and one day Patsy said:

"Madie, you will have to give it up."

"Give it up?"

"Yes."

"Patsy, I'll not give it up as long as my strength and intelligence remain to me."

"You will never succeed."

"I will succeed."

"You will never find her."

"I may never find her, but I will solve the mystery and, by ginger! Patsy, we've been fools."

"You mean me."

"Why?"

"Well, they say I am a crank, and possibly you have come to the same conclusion."

"I said we, Patsy."

"So we have been fools."

"Yes."

"How?"

"We have been searching for a clew."

"We have, and I don't think we have left a stone unturned."

"We have."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

"How and where?"

"We followed the Italian."

"Yes, the artist."

"We did not find Addie, but we struck something big."

"That is so."

"But there's one other person we have not trailed."

"Who is that?"

"The music teacher."

"A lady?"

"Yes."

"What purpose would she have in abducting Addie?"

"That is something we cannot tell; but it is just as well to take her history into camp."

"All right; I am with you every time."

Madie called upon Mrs. Metcalf and was compelled to admit to that lady that he had not met with any success whatever, but he said:

"There is one person I have not trailed yet."

"Who is that?"

"The music teacher."

"She is a woman."

"Yes."

"The detective did not think her worth trailing. They said she would have no object in abducting the girl."

"That may be so, but have you seen her since Addie disappeared?"

"No."

"You have not," ejaculated Madie.

"No."

"She never came to inquire from you why Addie did not appear to take her lessons?"

"She has never been near me."

"Madam, does it not appear strange that she should never have made any inquiry?"

"Now that you speak of it, yes, it does appear strange;

for I remember she appeared to take great interest in Addie, declared to me that the girl possessed a remarkable voice, would make a great singer, and she often called to see Addie."

"And she has not called to inquire about her since her disappearance?"

"She has not."

"And you admit that it is strange?"

"I do, now that you call my attention to it."

"We have a clew; yes, madam, we have a clew, and I will follow it up."

Madie secured the address of the music teacher and also some other facts in connection with her, and then bid Mrs. Metcalf good-day. He returned to his lodging and in answer to Patsy's question said:

"Yes, I've got a clew."

"You have?"

"Yes."

"In what direction?"

"The music teacher."

Patsy smiled; and our hero related his conversation with Mrs. Metcalf, and then Patsy said:

"Hang it! you are a genius. Who would have thought of such a thing? who would have suspected a woman of abducting another woman?"

"Addie is not a woman, but a girl with a remarkable voice."

"Madie, I really believe you have an excellent clew."

"I have; and we will start right out and investigate."

The two lads got themselves up in their best rig and started out upon the street. They went direct to the house where the music teacher, Miss Senley, had her studio. There was no sign on the door.

"See that, Patsy."

"What?"

"The sign of music teacher."

"I don't see it."

"Ah! there's the rub."

"Maybe she did not have any."

"Maybe she did."

"You're right; you can soon find out."

Madie went to the house and rang the bell; a servant appeared.

"I wish to see Miss Senley," said our hero.

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Well you'll not find her here."

"I will not find her here?"

"You'll not."

"Where will I find her, miss?"

"The devil knows, I don't."

"She has moved away?"

"She has."

"How long ago did she move away?"

"Oh, it's over two months since she went away from here."

"And can't you give me her new address?"

"I can't."

"You mean you don't know."

"I said what I meant; I can't give you her address."

"Will you tell me why?"

"She did not leave any address."

At that moment a lady stepped to the door and asked:

"What is it you seek?"

"I wish to find Miss Senley."

"I cannot tell you where you will find her."

"She did live here?"

"Yes, she rented a sleeping room and that parlor from me, and one day she gave me notice, paid her rent to the end of the month, and left without saying where she was going."

"Did she go away alone?"

"She did."

"Do you know where any of her friends can be found?"

"I do not."

"Do you know where she came from when she came here to board with you?"

"She came from Boston."

"Did she go to Boston from here?"

"I do not know; she may have gone to Boston."

"You never learned her Boston address?"

"No."

"I am much obliged to you, madam."

Our hero rejoined Patsy, who asked:

"Well, what did you make out?"

"We are on the right trail."

Madie related the circumstances and Patsy said:

"By ginger! Madie, I do believe now that you really are on the right trail, although it seems strange that the music teacher should have any purpose in abducting the girl."

"We can never tell, Patsy."

While the two boys had been talking, a bright-looking lad had been standing near and was watching them. Madie noticed the lad and asked:

"Do you live around here?"

"Yes, I do; I live right across the street."

"Did you know the lady who formerly lived here and gave music lessons?"

"Yes, I know her."

"Where is she?"

"She is gone away."

"Where has she gone?"

"She went in a boat."

"She went in a boat?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I saw her go on the boat."

"You did?"

"Yes, I did."

"What boat?"

"The boat that goes to Boston."

"Did you go down to the boat with her?"

"No, but my father is a market man. He had to deliver some packages on board the boat. I was with him and I saw the music teacher on the boat."

"Was she alone?"

"No."

"Who was with her?"

"Oh, the boat was full."

"But who was with Miss Senley?"

"I don't know as any one was with her."

The lad, as it appeared, was singularly literal.

"You do not know whether she had company or not?"

"No, I don't."

The two lads walked away.

"Our course is open now, Patsy."

"What will you do?"

"Go to Boston."

"Alone?"

"Do you want to go?"

"Yes."

"All right; we will go together."

The lads arranged things in their room and then went down to the pier and engaged passage on a Fall River boat, and at the proper hour they appeared on board.

As our readers will remember, Madie knew Boston well, far better than he did New York, and he so told Patsy.

The latter had never been on a great boat previously, and he was very much interested and wandered around by himself, and he asked a great many questions. The lads

arrived in Boston in due season and sought quarters in a cheap hotel. The fact of two lads being together of such dissimilar appearance and manners, caused them to attract considerable attention, and one man took it upon himself to ask a great many questions. He questioned Patsy:

"Where are you from?" he asked.

"New York," was Patsy's answer.

"Why did you come to Boston?"

"To buy it."

"Eh?"

"We came here to buy, my friend. There is a modern Monte Cristo, who is going to be married, and his bride requested a present different from any that had ever been given to any bride since the world began, and my friend said: 'I'll give you the city of Boston for a wedding present,' and she said, 'I'll take it,' and that's what we are here for, to buy Boston as a wedding present for a bride."

The man let the lad alone, but he concluded that he had struck a remarkably bright pair of lads, and what is more, he made up his mind that they were up to some scheme.

In the meantime, our hero and his comrade started out on their search. They walked Boston from one end of it to the other in search of a music teacher's sign bearing the name of Senley. They trudged all day, but without success, and they traveled around far into the night. At length Patsy admitted that he was sleepy and Madie said:

"You go to the hotel and to bed."

"What will you do?"

"Keep up the search."

"Why not retire and start in to-morrow?"

"I will spend the night on the street."

"Are you mad?"

"No."

"Then what is the matter with you?"

"Something may turn up."

"And shall I leave you?"

"Yes."

Patsy was really tired and returned to the hotel, and Madie kept on walking through the streets. He had no set purpose in his mind, but as he had told Patsy, he thought something might turn up. The truth was he really was too restless and nervous to sleep and preferred to walk the streets until he became exhausted. He had proceeded along for fully half an hour after Patsy left him, when he turned down a side street, and he had gone but a short distance when he heard an outcry; it was a woman's voice. The lad ran forward and he came upon three Boston dudes who were talking to a young girl. The latter had a bundle in her hand and a veil over her face, and the three dudes, as Madie learned when he approached, were insisting that the poor frightened girl should raise her veil and permit them to behold her face. The girl was protesting and pleading with them to let her pass on her way.

"Oh, please let me go," she pleaded.

"Let's look at your face, come now."

"No, no; let me pass."

"Let us gaze; I know you are pretty."

"Oh, please let me go."

"Come, come, up with your veil or we will raise it."

At that moment Madie approached and he demanded promptly:

"What will you do?"

There were three of the dudes and Madie was only a plain-looking lad. The dudes were men from twenty to twenty-five. They all turned toward Madie and the lad repeated his question:

"What will you fellows do?"

"Who are you?"

"Do you want to know?"

"Yes."

"I am Achilles, the brave defender of women, and you three Parisians had better start or I'll spear you."

"Hear him talk," said one of the dudes.

To the girl Madie said:

"Miss, go on your way, I will attend to these three little Peters; they're only dudes."

The girl did not move, and our readers will learn later on why it was she stood as though spellbound.

In the meantime the dudes began to demonstrate, and one of them said:

"See here, Johnny, you're too smart, you are."

"Am I?"

"Yes."

"Don't you like smart people?"

"No."

"That's not strange; smart people are so unlike yourselves; but you fellows moosey, do you hear?"

One of the three dudes considered himself quite a boxer. He had taken lessons from a sparring teacher; he was glad of an opportunity to display his prowess and he said:

"Here, you Johnny, you clear out or I'll split you."

"What will you do?"

"I'll split you."

"You will?"

"Yes, I will."

"You couldn't split a paper bag; you couldn't, you're no good."

Madie had measured the three dudes and he really was seeking to invite a scrimmage. He thought a little wrestle might settle his nerves.

As our hero spoke the dude stepped toward him in a threatening manner. Madie did not flinch.

"Come, move on, sonny."

"No, I won't."

The girl did not move, but on the contrary she said in an excited tone:

"Please don't fight."

"I must punish this rascal," said the dude, and he let fly his right. Well, a lively scene followed. The three dudes went down like paper men; Madie got around in their midst like a young cyclone. He knocked them down in quick succession; to him it was an easy job, and as they fell he kicked them and actually kept up his kicking as the three fellows rolled over and over to get out of his way, and as one after the other gained his feet, he ran off like a frightened deer and our hero returned to the girl who strangely enough, had stood still during the whole exciting scene, and as our hero approached, to his wild amazement and bewilderment, the girl said:

"Well, Madie, you always were a young Hercules, but how is it I meet you here in Boston?"

Madie felt as though he would fall over with astonishment, and so great was his amazement he could not speak, while the girl raised her veil and asked:

"Don't you know me, Madie?"

"Addie, by all that's strange and wonderful, is it you?"

"Yes, Madie, it's your old friend Addie."

"And how is it, Addie, I meet you in Boston after midnight alone in the streets? Speak quick, tell me. Oh, Addie, Addie," almost wailed Madie, "what has happened?"

"I have been a foolish girl, Madie."

Madie felt that he should die; his heart appeared to swell in his bosom, to too great a size to permit of its throbbing.

"You have been a foolish girl, Addie," he repeated in a husky voice.

The girl appeared to discern his terrible apprehensions and she at once said:

"Oh, yes, Madie, only foolish, and it is such a funny story I have to tell. Yes, it's too ridiculous for anything."

"Only ridiculous, Addie?"

"Yes."

"And that's all?"

"Yes."

"God bless you, Addie."

"Madie, tell me how it is I meet you in Boston. Have you returned to the seminary?"

"No, no, Addie, I came to Boston to find you. I've been looking for you for weeks; I've had such a strange experience, and to think that I should meet you right here. Why did you leave Mrs. Metcalf? why did you leave New York? why did you cease writing to me? Tell me all about it, Addie, tell me as quick as you can."

"I will tell you all about it, Madie, but I must have time, where can we go? I am running away."

"Running away, Addie?"

"Yes."

"Who from, Addie?"

"I'll tell you all about it."

"You need not run any further; you are safe now. No one will dare harm you while I am around."

"I am going to New York."

"At this hour?"

"Yes, there is a train at 1:15—a night train—I intend to take that train."

(Madie was a quick thinker and he said:

"All right, Addie, that is the best thing we can do; we will take that train together; we have just time to get to the depot; on the train you can tell me all."

Madie had forgotten all about his friend Patsy. When he reached the depot then he remembered and he wrote a telegram and a little later he and Addie were being hurled toward New York.

Addie's story was quickly told. Miss Senley had discovered that the girl possessed a remarkable voice, she was keen enough to know that there was a fortune in the girl's voice, and she had set to fascinate the girl. She succeeded and finally made the girl believe that Mrs. Metcalf was really a designing woman and her enemy, and that she would stand in her way for the future. We will not go over all the inducements tried, but Miss Senley actually hypnotized the poor girl, and finally persuaded her to steal away and thus carried her to Boston. It was not long after her arrival in Boston that Addie's eyes became opened and she wrote to her friends, but had reason later to suspect that all her letters had been intercepted, and finally she determined to run away and return to New York.

When Addie's story was completed Madie told his wonderful tale and he was still rehearsing his narrative when the train after its run of two hundred and thirty-four miles drew up in the Grand Central depot.

Madie took Addie direct to the home of Mrs. Metcalf where all the explanations followed, and the fair girl in all her beauty, declared that she had learned a lesson that would last her all her life.

On the day following Patsy returned to New York and heard the strange story and he exclaimed:

"Madie, it's wonderful, and you are indeed a wonder."

A week later our hero returned to his mountain home and to his friends of the League of Three, he detailed his strange adventures. They were bound to secrecy and to no one else was the strange narrative related.

Madie only remained in his native village a few weeks when he again returned to New York, and he and his whilom friend, Patsy, both secured positions in a law office. Our hero had determined to pursue his law studies near to Addie, who had resumed her music lessons, and it will not be strange, if in the near future, Madie and Patsy

become great lawyers and Addie becomes a great singer. One fact is certain, if she lives and Madie lives, she will some day become Mrs. Madie Heath, unless—well. both are too loyal and true for anything else to happen.

THE END.

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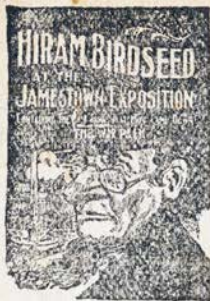
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